



NSWOG NEWS

cancer
institute
NSW



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Congratulations to our re-elected NSWOG Chairs and Deputy Chairs. Professor Robyn Ward (chair) and Professor Judy Kirk (deputy) were re-elected for NSWOG Cancer Genetics, with A/Professor Richard Chye continuing to guide NSWOG Palliative Care. A special thanks to acting chairs Dr Campbell Tiley (NSWOG Haematology) and A/Professor John Gullotta (NSWOG General Practice) who have held the fort during chair sabbatical leave.

NSWOG Field Officer reports

Whenever you start a new job, it's natural for people to enquire about it;

"I'm a Field Officer"

"What? You work on a farm?"

"No, with an NSWOG"

"A what-wog?"

But thankfully my achievements since starting with NSWOG Haematology in April haven't been limited to de-coding acronyms. Working to support and establish processes to increase participation in haematology clinical trials in NSW has seen me travel from Tweed Heads to Albury-Wodonga, interviewing doctors, nurses, data managers and whoever I can get hold of to find out the barriers to recruiting patients to clinical trials and practical ideas for improvement. I have also been gathering data on participation rates to paint the picture of past activity so we can compare future activity levels. As the first step towards a Clinical Trials Associates' Communication Forum, I have established a listserv facility to foster communication between Data Managers and Clinical Trials Nurses and create an information-sharing network environment. Quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis is now virtually complete and will be presented to the NSWOG Haematology



Peter Murray, NSWOG Haematology

Oncology this month. A note of thanks to all the busy clinicians and research associates who have made room in their tight schedules to help with the data collection, answer my intrusive questions and offer all manner of useful suggestions on how the business of conducting clinical trials in Haematology can be done better.

Surgeons are an odd bunch because unlike most Australians, they like to spend time indoors seeing patients, operating and reading large text books. I was pleased then to hear the annual conference for the Australian Sarcoma Group was to be held in sunny Brisbane. Being fond of the outdoors, I immediately thought sand and surf, but it was not to be. It was, however, extremely interesting with presentations from a diverse range of speakers with backgrounds in basic science, pathology, geneology, medical oncology and radiology presenting. Tracey Wickam, whose daughter sadly succumbed to this disease recently, opened the conference with a heart-felt speech and dedication to continue as a spokeswoman for this rare and specialised group. NSWOG Bone and Soft Tissue Sarcoma has asked me to coordinate across three key areas of importance: data collection; clinical trials and tissue banking. I've been liaising with the four key treatment sites in NSW ascertaining what their minimum data set should be and collaborating with the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in Melbourne. It makes sense to have a national database for this clinical group given the small incidence of patients (~240 per annum) and I am looking forward to visiting this Centre to form partnerships and pursue my other great love - shopping!



Jo-Anne Milne, NSWOG Bone & Soft Tissue Sarcoma

Cancer Institute NSW Current Funding Opportunities

Cancer Institute NSW International Sabbatical Grant 2008

Closes: Friday 23 November 2007

Medical, psycho-oncology, radiotherapy, allied health and nursing staff are invited to apply for up to \$20 000 to travel abroad for up to three months between February and June 2008 to visit clinicians in centres of excellence in their field of practice. Successful applicants will demonstrate their capacity to influence and drive service improvements in cancer care in NSW.

Application guidelines are available on the [Cancer Institute NSW](http://www.cancerinstitute.org.au) website.

Contact Nik Todorovski on Nik.Todorovski@cancerinstitute.org.au or 02 8374 3524.

Cancer Institute NSW Health Services Innovation Grants

A call for Expressions of Interest will be released shortly by the Cancer Institute NSW for the Health Services Innovation Grant program for 2008. Please check the Cancer Institute NSW website for details.

Contact Tasia Malinowski on Tasia.Malinowski@cancerinstitute.org.au or 02 8374 5634

For application details visit www.cancerinstitute.org.au

September & October Meetings



Prof Glenn Marshall

NSWOG Child and Adolescent convened with a busy agenda, including presentations by Professor Jim Bishop and Chair Professor Glenn Marshall reflecting on achievements of the NSWOG to date. Dr John Collins presented on the Children's Hospital Westmead Pain and Palliative Care Service, which is now recognised as a sub-specialty and has been integrated into paediatric oncology.

The consultants engaged to complete the **NSWOG Urology** priority project presented a comprehensive update on their progress on the Strategic Urology Oncology Plan. Detailed feedback was provided by the committee around the current information and format. The meeting also included presentations on the MDT projects for Urology, and broad discussion around synoptic pathology reporting for prostate cancer.



Dr Andrew Brooks



Kathryn Nattress & Dr Chris Dalrymple

Development of the **Gynaecological Oncology** Palliative Care Guidelines has progressed better than expected with the final document is anticipated for completion by year end. The highly successful rural residential retreats for Gynae-oncology patients, run by the Psychosocial Support Group, will continue for another year with additional funding from the Cancer Council NSW. A new module has been developed for Gynaecological Oncology Nursing at the University of Sydney. It will be conducted for the first time early in 2008, with one clinical day included in the five day program, especially for rural/regional nurses. It can be run as a stand alone module but is also accredited as part of post graduate nursing.



A/Prof Richard Chye

The **NSWOG Palliative Care** meeting featured a presentation from Leanne Wells from the Australian Division of General Practice Network, on the pilot program Rural Palliative Care Project conducted in eight Rural Divisions of General Practice. The program was very successful and further funding has been allocated from the Federal Government to extend the program to 36 Rural and Regional Divisions of General Practice. The group were updated on the NSW Health and Cancer Institute NSW Descriptive Overview of Palliative Care Services in NSW, which is due for release shortly. There was discussion around progress of the Palliative Care Academic Unit and the Statewide Centre for the Improvement of Palliative Care (SCIP). The CiSCaT team also presented palliative care resources now available for use.

NSWOG Melanoma collaboratively finalised the Melanoma Data Dictionary at their September meeting, and received an update on their NSWOG Priority Project. A Project Officer has been assigned to collect state-wide recurrence data, and is currently defining the data using the Sydney Melanoma Unit database and Clinical Cancer Registry.



Prof John Thompson

NSWOG Breast were provided an interim report on the collection of the NBCC dataset in SSWAHS including a 2006 snapshot of female breast cancer data, collected by the SESIAHS Clinical Cancer Registry. The meeting included a presentation from a Cancer Council NSW volunteer who highlighted the importance of peer support; an update on the synoptic pathology reporting pilot, MDT development projects and new federal funding of breast prostheses for cancer patients.



A/Prof David Gillett



Prof Michael Barton

NSWOG Neuro-oncology were presented with an overview of clinical quality outcomes of multi-disciplinary tumour clinics operating in a Singapore Hospital, which highlighted the pivotal role of the Cancer Care Coordinator. The committee worked with the Cancer Institute NSW's Senior Epidemiologist to appropriately classify histological groupings which will be used in a comparative 20 year study of brain cancer survival in NSW. Also on the agenda - the newly-funded National Collaborative Trials Group and their potential role in NSW.

Seasons Greetings from NSWOG

Wishing all our members a safe and happy festive season!

Thank you for your contribution over the past year and we look forward to a productive 2008.



November & December Calendar

5 November: NSWOG General Practice

4:30pm – 6:30pm: ATP Boardroom

7 November: NSWOG Upper GI

7pm – 9pm: ATP Boardroom

8 November: NSWOG Palliative Care

9.30am – 12.30pm: ATP Boardroom

8 November: NSWOG Cancer Genetics

3:30pm – 5:30pm: Cancer Institute NSW Boardroom

12 November: NSWOG Executive

4pm – 6pm: ATP Boardroom

12 November: NSWOG Head and Neck

6pm – 8pm: ATP Boardroom

19 November: NSWOG Complementary Therapies

4pm – 6pm: ATP Boardroom

20 November: NSWOG Radiotherapy

4.30pm – 6.30pm: Cancer Institute NSW Boardroom

21 November: NSWOG Colorectal

5:30pm – 7:30pm: ATP Boardroom

26 November: NSWOG Bone & Soft Tissue Sarcoma

6pm – 8pm: ATP Boardroom

27 November: NSWOG Melanoma

6pm – 8pm: ATP Boardroom

28 November: NSWOG Haematology Oncology

4pm – 6pm: ATP Boardroom

30 November: NSWOG Neuro-Oncology

7.30am – 9.30am: ATP Boardroom

30 November: NSWOG Rural Oncology

1.30pm – 5pm: Rural Doctors Network, Mascot

3 December: NSWOG Urology

6:30pm – 8:30pm: ATP Boardroom

6 December: NSWOG Lung

3pm – 5pm: ATP Boardroom

12 December: NSWOG Child and Adolescent

4pm – 6pm: ATP Boardroom

Community Corner

Melanie Trethowan
NSWOG Rural Oncology

After losing a number of aunts, uncles and dear family friends to a number of cancers, I felt I needed to 'do' something to help cancer patients, particularly those in rural and remote NSW. Living in Greater Western NSW, I decided to join NSWOG Rural Oncology to get a better understanding of the systems and policies that affect rural and regional cancer patients. The meetings are a great forum to table and prioritise grass roots issues so that they may be considered in the policy formulation process. Each meeting, I provide the committee with an update from a 'community' perspective. It's great to be given an opportunity to provide a voice for rural cancer patients and highlight pressing issues in the company of the State's top rural cancer carers and clinicians. I draw inspiration from my volunteer work; as Regional Advocacy Network Facilitator for The Cancer Council NSW, and getting involved in a number of local cancer initiatives such as raising funds for oncology nursing scholarships and the restoration of a 1927 Whippet Whizza car for prostate cancer research.

it's great to provide
a voice for rural
cancer patients



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Research Round-up

The Research Team has had some exciting changes in recent months. Data demonstrating cancer clinical trial activity in NSW is currently being prepared for publication as a monograph. The NSW Cancer Trials Network, the model for support of cancer clinical trials in NSW, has also been presented in poster abstracts at the recent Clinical Research Excellence (CRX07) Conference and the NHMRC CTC Clinical Trials Symposium.

The audit of cancer research activity in NSW 2004-2006 has been completed and includes information on funding and staffing of cancer research units across the state, broken down by broad research areas, tumour groupings and NSW research hubs.

A separate analysis of NSW Cancer Research publication output is almost complete. This analysis will examine trends in NSW cancer research publication output and impact factors from 1999 - 2006, as well as comparisons with Australia and the World, broken down by broad research areas, tumour groupings and NSW research hubs.

The Research Grants Review Committee met in late September to deliberate on applications for Career Development & Support Fellowships, Research Scholars and Research Leaders. A large number of high quality internationally competitive proposals were reviewed and a recommendation for funding has been made to the board.

The development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) for competitive grants across the institution commenced in mid-October, ensuring consistency and excellence in this important operational activity.

Farewell...

Sadly, the Research Team announces the departure of one of the Cancer Institute NSW's longest serving employees. After three years, Ethics Manager Rodney Ecclestone will be leaving to take up a new role at the National E-Health Transition Authority. The Research Team would like to take this opportunity to thank Rodney for his many years of hard work and enthusiasm. Rodney has been heavily involved in many of the programs we currently run within the Research Division, and will be sorely missed by not only the Research Team, but the wider Cancer Institute NSW community.

Good bye and good luck Rodney.

Welcome - new Research staff members...



Natalie Galbraith
Project Officer, Clinical
Trials

Natalie joined us as the Clinical Trials Project Officer. She has a strong background in clinical trials, previously working as a study coordinator in Haematology at Royal Perth Hospital, then moving to Sydney to take up a position as Clinical Data Manager at Novogen, specialising in Ovarian, Cervical and Prostate Cancer. Most recently, Natalie was responsible for Quality and Training at Eli Lilly.



Amy McKenzie
Executive Assistant to the
Director, Cancer Research

Amy was PA to the COO of Photon Group, a marketing/communications group.

The Research division welcomed Amy to the team in August. She has a strong background in advertising and has worked in a variety of roles including Client services, Production and Studio Management. Prior to joining the Cancer Institute NSW,



Maria Gorbacheva
Administrative Support
Officer, Research

the QLD Guardianship and Administration Tribunal.

Maria joined the Cancer Institute NSW Research team in September to provide administrative support to both the Ethics and Grant programs. Prior to her arrival here, Maria worked for a number of government organisations both in NSW and QLD. Her most recent role was with