MESSAGE FROM THE ASSOCIATE DEAN

This is the first of our planned monthly newsletters from The Children’s Hospital at Westmead Clinical School and the University of Sydney Discipline of Paediatrics and Child Health. We want to make this a mechanism for regular communication about Clinical School events including Education, Research and Postgraduate Research Student Supervision. Over the next few months we will refine the format of the newsletter, so please bear with us as we do so. We welcome your contributions to making this a useful form of communication.

Louise Baur
Associate Dean, The Children’s Hospital Westmead Clinical School

CLINICAL SCHOOL NEWS

CHANCELLOR’S VISIT

The Children’s Hospital at Westmead Clinical School was delighted to host a visit from the Chancellor and Deputy Chancellor of the University of Sydney on Monday 23rd March. Ms Belinda Hutchinson AM, Chancellor, and Mr Alex Brennan AM, Deputy Chancellor, spent several hours meeting with staff of the Clinical School and the hospital.

The Chancellor and Deputy Chancellor met initially with the CHW Clinical School Executive – Drs Anne Morris and Nicholas Wood, and Profs Russell Dale and Louise Baur - and Profs Elizabeth Elliott and Chris Cowell, and learnt about the decades-long strong links between the hospital and the University of Sydney, the highly evaluated medical student and Masters level coursework provided by the School, the strategies used by the School to support its 108 higher degree research students, and the many processes aimed at growing and supporting an integrated approach to research across the hospital.

After a tour of the hospital, the Chancellor and Deputy Chancellor visited the Kids Research Institute. They learnt about advances in bone remodelling and fracture repair from Tegan Cheng, PhD student, from the Orthopaedic Research and Biotechnology Unit, heard about the gene therapy and genomics work undertaken by Prof Ian Alexander and colleagues, and discussed the work undertaken by Profs Elizabeth Elliott and Yvonne Zurity and colleagues in the area of rare disease surveillance and fetal alcohol spectrum disorders.

Afterwards, the Chancellor and Deputy Chancellor met with members of the Executive from both the Sydney Children’s Hospitals Network and Western Sydney Local Health District.

In all the discussions, there were many references to the opportunities that the Westmead Precinct development offers over the years ahead. In addition to the major infrastructure investment
provided by the NSW State Government to the precinct, the University of Sydney has committed $50 million in the next five years and more substantial funds in the years thereafter. For this reason, and many others, the Senate of the University of Sydney and the Chancellor and Deputy Chancellor are keen to have more of a presence at the Westmead campus.

Letter from the Chancellor:
Thank you very much for organising the wonderful tour of the Children’s Hospital and the Kids Research Institute. Alec and I were so impressed by everybody we met and their sense of passion and commitment to the hospital and the University, whether it be in their research, teaching or clinician roles, and in most cases all three! We look forward to coming out and visiting again. The Senate is excited about the University plans for significantly growing our presence at Westmead. There is such a strong foundation of research and teaching on which to build.

Please pass on Alec’s and my special thanks to Anne, Russell, Nick, Chris, Ian, their teams and everyone involved in putting together the tour.

Kind regards
Belinda
Belinda Hutchinson AM
Chancellor

IN THE MEDIA
The Four Corners episode, “At Their Mercy”, on Monday 25 March, looked at the bullying and bastardisation of young doctors in hospitals. A commissioned article in The Conversation, "Let’s stop the bullying of trainee doctors – for patients’ sake”, on Tuesday 26 May by Kimberley Ivory (Sydney School of Public Health) and Karen Scott (CHW Clinical School) highlights the issue of bullying for all medical professionals. The article draws upon some of the research in this area conducted by Karen, Jenny Barrett (University of Melbourne), Patrina Caldwell (CHW Clinical School) and Liz Barnes (Kids Research Institute), which will be published in the Medical Journal of Australia on 3 August.

The link to The Conversation is:

THE AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF HEALTH & MEDICAL SCIENCES
Australia’s newest learned Academy, was formally launched on 25th March 2015 in Canberra. Two members of The Children’s Hospital at Westmead Clinical School are involved with the Academy.
The Academy aims to be an important part of the health and medical scientific and policy landscape of Australia. The Commonwealth Department of Health, the National Health and Medical Research Council, and the Group of Eight Universities were involved in the development phase of the Academy, and there have been consultations with a range of other key organisations in Australia and internationally.

The Academy was then established formally in June 2014, with the election of 15 initial Fellows and Council members, under the presidency of Prof Ian Frazer and the patronage of Prof Sir Gustav Nossal. One of the Council members is Prof Louise Baur, Associate Dean of The Children’s Hospital at Westmead Clinical School.

A further 116 Fellows representing a range of disciplines in health and medical research were inducted into the Academy on 25th March 2015. The Fellows include Prof Ian Alexander, clinician-scientist based at CHW, and includes others from the University of Sydney, including the Dean, Prof Bruce Robinson.

Major activities planned in 2015 include the establishment of a mentoring program for early and mid-career researchers, establishment of a process to provide independent advice to government and the community on issues of importance to health and medical research and the holding of an inaugural scientific meeting.

The three broad purposes of the Academy are:

Mentoring the next generation of clinician and population health/health services researchers.

Providing independent advice to government and others on issues relating to evidence based medical practice and health and medical research.

Providing a forum for discussion on progress on health and medical research with an emphasis on translation of research into practice.

For more information, please see the website: http://www.aahms.org/

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Prof Jonathan Craig, Senior Staff Specialist at The Children’s Hospital at Westmead has recently been appointed to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC).

Professor Jonathan Craig is a Paediatric Nephrologist and holds a personal Chair in Clinical Epidemiology in the School of Public Health at the University of Sydney. Prof Craig is also a member of the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC).

This appointment is significant as PBAC advice enables the Government to improve the listing of drugs on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) at a price that individuals and community can afford.

Congratulations to Prof Craig on this important honour.
ANZAHPE (Australian and New Zealand Association for Health Professional Educators) joined with the AMEA (Asian Medical Education Association) to host a combined ANZAHPE/AMEA Conference in Newcastle at the end of March. Over 400 delegates met to discuss education leadership, education standards, innovation in medical education and challenges in clinical training. Anne Morris presented preliminary results on behalf of her co-investigators Karen Scott and Ben Marais, from their study "Investigating the learning habits of the modern medical student" and Patrina Caldwell presented on "Teaching EBM in resource limited settings using a smart phone". We encourage anyone interested in health professional education to contact us and join us for our bimonthly Tuesday lunchtime meetings.

Next year’s meeting will be held with the 17th Ottawa Conference (assessment and evaluation focus) in Perth from 19 to 23 March 2016. Preconference workshops and symposia submissions are due 20 May 2015. Abstract submissions close 31 July 2015.


**POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENT NEWS**

**GRADUATES OF APRIL 2015**

Congratulations to:

Minal Menezes, PhD  
Gene discovery and functional studies of Mitochondrial Respiratory Chain Disorders  
Supervisors: John Christodoulou, Sandra Cooper, Lisa Riley

Natalie Pride, PhD  
The Behavioural Phentype of Neurofibromatosis Type 1: A Cognitive and Neuroimaging Perspective  
Supervisors: Kathryn North, Belinda Barton, Jonathan Payne

Jennifer Lorenzo, PhD  
Early identification of cognitive deficits in young children with Neurofibromatosis Type 1  
Supervisors are: Belinda Barton, Kathryn North
DO YOU WANT TO BE A RESEARCH SUPERVISOR?

The Discipline of Paediatrics & Child Health supervisor accreditation program at the Children’s Hospital at Westmead is being run again this year. The course is aimed at auxiliary supervisors to step up to research supervision and meet criteria for registration with the University. Research supervisors are welcome to encourage potential supervisors to attend.

Please register and add the dates to your diary. Participants need to attend two of the three seminars and present at the final accreditation seminar:

Seminar 1 - “Expectations of supervisors and students in postgraduate research candidature”
  Friday 24 July 2-4pm, Large Research Meeting Room, Level 2, KRI, CHW

Seminar 2 - “Monitoring Progress”
  Friday 7 August, 2-4pm, Education Centre’s Common Room, Level 4, CHW

Seminar 3 - “Supporting writing in postgraduate research candidature”
  Friday 21 August, 2-4pm, Large Research Meeting Room, Level 2, KRI, CHW

Seminar 4 - “Final Presentations by Participants”
  Monday 31 August, 2-4pm, Large Research Meeting Room, Level 2, KRI, CHW

Attendance and presentation at the Final Accreditation Presentation Seminar is compulsory.

The criteria for Research Supervisor registration with the University’s Graduate Studies Office include 12 months experience as an auxiliary supervisor and completion of the Discipline’s course or the Foundations of Research Supervision at the Institute of Teaching and Learning.

Further information:
http://sydney.edu.au/graduate_studies_office/Supervisor/Apply_tobe_a_Supervisor.shtml

To register or if you have any questions, please email: postgradchw.schn@health.nsw.gov.au

UPDATE SESSION FOR CURRENT SUPERVISORS

• Supervisors - Do you know what Sydney Student is and how to use it?
• Are you up to date with the online forms?
• How do the four Research Periods impact on candidature?

An update for the Discipline’s postgraduate supervisors (both research and auxiliary) on new University policies, Sydney Student, Research Periods, examination, the Postgrad Team and more will be held on:

- Friday 13 November 2015, 12.30pm–1.30pm
  Large Meeting Room, Level 2, Kids Research Institute, at The Children’s Hospital Westmead

Attendance is strongly encouraged for all supervisors. Lunch will be provided.

Please RSVP to: postgradchw.schn@health.nsw.gov.au
**FREE ACCESS TO SCIENCEDIRECT FOR 6-12 MONTHS FOR UNEMPLOYED POST-DOCS**

Since 2012 Elsevier has been running a regular program offering free access to ScienceDirect for 6 months to unemployed postdocs. Recently the program has been extended for 12 months if participants do not find a position within the first 6 months.

Full details of the application process can be found via the following link:
http://www.elsevier.com/journal-authors/an-opportunity-for-postdoctoral-scholars

**FOUR-YEAR OLD MAKES HISTORY IN WORLD-FIRST ATTEMPT TO PREVENT TYPE 1 DIABETES**

*Sydney Morning Herald Article by Amy Corderoy*

Isla Robinson is a very special little girl. At four years old she might not be old enough to understand it, but on Wednesday she made scientific history.

Isla was the first person in the world to be injected with blood stored from her umbilical cord when she was born in an effort to prevent her developing type 1 diabetes.

Researchers hope the blood, rich in immune cells, will help reboot her immune system to prevent the condition, which occurs when the body attacks and kills its own insulin-producing cells.

Fairfax Media first reported in 2012 that the study, run through the Kids Research Institute at the Children's Hospital at Westmead, would in future be looking for people who banked their cord blood.

"It just seemed like a good insurance policy I suppose," Isla's mother, Rachel Weldon, said of her decision to bank her daughter's cord blood in 2011. "Now being involved in this trial we just feel so grateful."

Isla's family were chosen to be included because her half-brother has type 1 diabetes. She and her sister Ruby, 6, both had blood tests to look for antibodies in their blood that indicated the condition was developing.

Ruby was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes only days after her first blood test. Since then, Isla has had tests every six months and the medical team went ahead with the transfusion this week after she went from having only one to three of the four possible antibodies in her blood that put her at a very high risk of developing the condition.

"All the studies suggest she will actually develop it one day, so if we can stop that it would be fantastic," said study leader Maria Craig. "I'm hoping we can completely switch off that autoimmune process and she will never get it."

Another possibility is that the cord blood, and in particular the high amount of immune cells called T-cells it contains, will not prevent diabetes in the long-term, but will significantly delay the age at which Isla develops it.

"It could be many years while it dampens down her immune response," Professor Craig said. "Even if it could delay it to adolescence, until she is older, that would be fantastic because that also buys us time for other therapies that are being developed."
The blood had been collected from Isla's umbilical cord, and cryoprotective agents added so it could be stored in temperatures below minus 160 degrees. On Wednesday, it was defrosted, washed and diluted and then slowly infused back into her body over a period of nearly half an hour.

Before the infusion, Isla was given a mild antihistamine to prevent allergic reaction, and antibiotics, as well as having a blood test.

It was the only part of the procedure that seemed to upset the brave four-year-old. Lucky, staff at Westmead were on hand with flower and Kung Fu Panda stickers to make it better.

Professor Craig said Isla was the first of 20 children who would receive the transfusion. At first only blood banked at Australia's largest private blood bank, Cell Care (sponsor of the study) was eligible, it will now be extended to other banks and to people in New Zealand and the US.

Critics of the expanding private cord blood-banking market have raised concerns that it will encourage parents to spend large amounts of money banking blood they will never use. But Professor Craig said the evidence of the value of T-cells in conditions such as type 1 diabetes, heart disease, stroke and neurological disorders had only increased since the study was launched in 2012, with some providers offering discounts for clinical trials.

But Isla's sister Ruby, who has already developed type 1 diabetes, knows it won't be too bad if her little sister develops it as well – she says life with diabetes is just "normal".

In the meantime she has enjoyed the trip to Sydney from the family's home state of Western Australia, which has featured a visit to a pirate ship and a gift of new puzzles at the children's hospital.

"I'd stay here for a bit longer," she said.


**HEARING EAr HEALTH AND LANGUAGE SERVICES (HEALS)**

HEALS is a NSW Health funded initiative providing ENT surgery and speech therapy intervention for Aboriginal children across NSW. HEALS sprang from SEARCH (Study of Environment on Aboriginal Resilience and Child Health) a cohort study of urban Aboriginal children. SEARCH resulted from a partnership between researchers, the Sax Institute, and several Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, including: Aboriginal Medical Service Western Sydney, Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation, Awabakal Ltd, and Riverina Medical and Dental. Illawarra Aboriginal Medical Service and La Perouse Health Service were also included as HEALS expanded to benefit a greater number of children. In 2013, HEALS used these existing relationships to rapidly deploy funds to enable 94 ENT operations across the state, despite working in a 3 month timeframe. HEALS also managed to fund 3008 speech pathology intervention sessions of 30 minutes duration. In 2014, HEALS was able to fund 100 ENT operations and >2800 speech pathology intervention sessions, despite a 15% cut in funding. In 2015, NSW Health has refunded HEALS to continue this good work. We anticipate achieving the milestone of the 1000th child benefitting from HEALS in 2015. We have three separate HEALS evaluations underway at present, including an investigation of the health economic benefits of a state-wide expansion using cost benefit analysis, commissioned by SEARCH through the University of Sydney.
HEALS is managed through the Sydney Children’s Hospitals Network (Westmead) by Dr Hasantha Gunasekera and Leigh Smith (Children’s Hospital at Westmead Clinical School).

STAFF NOTICES

PROMOTIONS/NEW TITLES

Congratulations to:

- Dr Alan Garner, Clinical Senior Lecturer
- Dr Ameneh Khatami, Clinical Senior Lecturer
- Adjunct Professor John Knight, dual title The George Institute for Global Health and The Children’s Hospital at Westmead Clinical School
- Dr Esther Tantsis, Clinical Senior Lecturer
- Dr Marcel Zimmet, Adjunct Lecturer

ANNUAL LEAVE

For all staff employed under a University contract, a reminder to all supervisors and staff to ensure that annual leave is taken at appropriate times. The University has an excess leave policy as part of the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) with regards to the accumulation of excess leave.

For more details please refer to Clause 169 (c) of the EA which can be viewed at: https://intranet.sydney.edu.au/employment/enterprise-agreement/2013-17-parts/part-f.html#annual-leave

For supervisors who have staff employed under their research grants is it imperative that they ensure all leave is taken within the contract period as any leave liability owed to their staff member would have to come from their grant funds.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Children’s Hospital at Westmead Clinical School and the Discipline of Paediatrics & Child Health at the University of Sydney has just advertised a continuing full-time Senior Lecturer position. Please let your networks know of the position.

Basic information about the position:

We are seeking to appoint a Senior Lecturer in Paediatrics and Child Health. You will engage in research in collaboration with other researchers and groups within the CHW Clinical School. You will also contribute to face-to-face teaching and assessment of medical students, and to the teaching of postgraduate coursework students. You will also have an appointment as a Clinical Academic at The Children’s Hospital at Westmead and will contribute to the clinical care of inpatients and outpatients.

To succeed in securing this position you will have:

- a PhD or equivalent and a demonstrated successful research record with evidence of an upward trajectory in research performance including publications and successful grant acquisition
• an MBBS, or equivalent, and FRACP or other specialist recognition as provided for under the Health Insurance Act 1973
• current registration (or eligibility to register) with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
• ability to liaise effectively with staff at all levels from a wide range of disciplines and backgrounds
• experience in the supervision of research students and experience in teaching medical students
• highly developed organisational skills, project management skills, interpersonal skills, written and oral communication skills and computer literate

Preference will be given to applicants with research expertise in one or more of the following areas: obesity, diabetes, epidemiology, genomics, informatics, “big data” management, health services and/or general paediatrics.

The position is full-time continuing, subject to the completion of a satisfactory probation and/or confirmation period for new appointees. Applications close 9th July.

For further information please contact Professor Louise Baur on (02) 9845 1906 or by email: louise.baur@health.nsw.gov.au

**RECENT FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS AND PRIZES**

Congratulations to the following:

**GRANTS**

**Patrina Caldwell**
Australian Bladder Foundation
Using an intelligent agent to improve adherence to eHealth advice using eADVICE (electronic Advice and Diagnosis Via the Internet following Computerised Evaluation) for children with urinary incontinence
$20,000

**Rafael Calvo, Karen Scott, Stewart Dunn, John Watson**
The University of Sydney Strategic Priority Areas for Research Collaboration (SPARC) Implementation (Brain, Mind and Research Institute)
Improving patients’ mental health and wellbeing through Tele-health feedback systems
$50,000

**Jonathan Craig**
Program Grant from NHMRC commencing in 2016

**Elizabeth Elliott**
Department of Health
FASD Technical Network
$77,000

Sydney Medical Foundation
Rare Disease Register
$99,974
Sarah Garnett, Louise Baur, Chris Cowell
The Financial Markets Foundation for Children Grant
The intermittent modified fast diet and insulin resistance in obese adolescents: a pilot study
$140,000

Cheryl Jones, Haley Smithers-Sheedy
Sydney Medical School Foundation
Profiling cerebral palsy (CP) due to congenital cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection
$10,000

Gulam Khandaker, Hayley Smithers-Sheedy, Nadia Badawi, Cheryl Jones, Robert Booy
Cerebral Palsy Alliance Research Foundation Project Grant
Bangladesh Cerebral Palsy (CP) Register: IT Set Up
$27,000

Kasia Kozlowska
University SPARC Implementation (BMRI) Fund: Gender Dysphoria in Australian Children and Adolescents: Assessing Brain Structure and Function using Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging
$35,065

Paul Robinson
Sydney Medical School Foundation
Feasibility of home based monitoring with forced oscillation in school aged children with asthma
$33,000

AWARDS

James Fitzpatrick, PhD student
Winner of the Wiley Award
Lililwan Project, RACP meeting

Emily Fitzpatrick, MPhil student
Finalist in the Rue Wright Award
Lililwan Project, RACP meeting

INFORMATION TO CONTRIBUTE?

If you would like to contribute information for the newsletter or give advance notice of meetings, please contact nika.mamontov@health.nsw.gov.au

We welcome all contributions!