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Nepean Clinical School

2007 for the Nepean Clinical School is a time of growth and change.

In February we welcomed 52 Year 1 students to Nepean, 12 more Year 1 students than 2006. Combined with our 39 Year 2 students, 32 Year 3 students and 32 Year 4 students our student numbers have doubled providing new challenges to our year co-ordinators.

Five new Academic positions have been established, Associate Professor George Condous- Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Dr Sally Poulton – Paediatrics and Dr Stuart Lane – Critical Care. Associate Professor Martin Krause- Neurology, will join the Clinical School in June this year and Associate Professor Gustavo Duque, Geriatrics, in November.

Plans for the Education Block in the Specialist Centre in Derby Street are progressing. We are looking forward to moving our Educators and students into the Block early this year.

The University is undertaking a curriculum review for the University of Sydney Medical Program. Outcomes of the review will be released to the Clinical Schools later this year and implemented in 2008.

To all of our tutors thank you for teaching the students and being part of the Nepean Clinical School. To the Clinical School staff, your ability to take on new challenges and see them through enhances the Nepean experience for our students. I wish everyone a happy 2007 and look forward to the growth and change in the Nepean Clinical School.

Professor Michael Peek

Associate Dean and Head of School
NEPEAN CLINICAL SCHOOL



Clinical School Staff with Med 1 Tutors and Students

NEPEAN CLINICAL SCHOOL TEACHER OF THE YEAR 2006

The Teacher of the Year awards for the University of Sydney GMP Program, Nepean Clinical School, 2006 were announced by Professor Michael Peek at the last Grand Rounds for 2006. Students from Years 1 – 4 voted for the best teacher in each year. The students' votes express their thanks to the Teachers for their hard work and dedication throughout the year. Professor Peek thanked the winners and all the Teachers in the program. Their time and effort are greatly appreciated, both by the students and members of the Nepean Clinical School.

Teachers of the Year 2006 are:

Year 1: Dr Stuart Lane

Year 2: Dr Rahim Daneshjoo

Year 3: Dr Louise Cole

Year 4 - A three-way-tie:
Dr Karen Fisher
Dr Kevin London
Dr Kathy Niven



Professor Peek congratulates Dr Stuart Lane



Professor Peek congratulates Dr Rahim Daneshjoo



Professor Peek congratulates Dr Louise Cole



Professor Peek congratulates Dr Karen Fisher

Shave for Leukaemia Day

The Nepean Clinical school supported the Shave for Leukaemia day, by entering a team on March the 15th

The shaving group was lead by Prof. Michael Peek and included A/P George Condous, Prof. Ralph Nanan, Dr Bernard Champion and Biren Singh.

Two of our med 3 students – Michael Bakunowicz and Ik Hyun An, boldly represented our students.

We also had Pat Waters from our delivery suite, who was our only female brave enough to shave.

Sarah Whereat (Morton) and Susan Dowd had their hair sprayed in bright royal blue to go with their blonde hair for University colours.

All the money hasn't come in yet, but we hope to have made a decent donation for such a good cause.

We would like to send a big thankyou for Darren Gardner from Zenergy salon in Katoomba for giving up his time so early in the morning to help shave our heads.



Darren shaving Prof. Peek who is smiling in encouragement as he was first to lose his locks



'The Peek Team' after our Shave for Leukaemia morning.

Back row: Prof. Nanan, Prof. Peek, Sarah Whereat, Biren Singh, Darren Gardner (our hairdresser), Ik Hyun An and Michael Bakunowicz (two of our students), Dr Champion and A/P Condous.

Front row: Pat Waters, Susan Dowd and Dr Louise Cole



Our 2 student representatives Michael Bakunowicz and Ik Hyun An, clean shaven



Marilyn Reed spraying Sarah Whereat University blue, Darren Gardner shaving Ik Hyun An, and Dr. Louise Cole shaving A/P. George Condous

Med 1 Orientation

Nepean Clinical School (NCS) held its annual Orientation for Med 1 students on Wednesday February 14. This year 52 enthusiastic medical students embarked on their journey to Nepean Hospital from as near as South Penrith and from as far away as Matraville and Woronora Heights! Student numbers at NCS have doubled in the last five years and now rival student numbers at some of the 'larger' Clinical Schools.

Following an introduction by Professor Michael Peek (Associate Dean) and Clinical School Staff, students participated in a Team Building exercise "Surgical Smarties". Students were required to dress each other in full PPE (gown, mask, goggles and gloves) plus shoe covers, theatre cap and stethoscope. Each person then picked up and carried a smartie (sweet) with a pair of forceps across the room. The first team with all members having dressed in the surgical garb and the correct number of smarties in the dish were the winners. This exercise was a great 'Ice breaker' for introducing students to each other and also a very entertaining display of the many different ways in which 'surgical' attire can be worn!

Med 1 orientation also included a series of lectures and practical sessions that were aimed at introducing and reviewing the fundamental principles of OHS (Manual Handling and Fire Safety), Infection Control, Basic Life Support and Hospital Security.

Med 3 students (Will Dey, Mark Salter & Paul Savage) spoke with Med 1 about their experiences of life as medical students at Nepean. This was followed by a BBQ lunch courtesy of Welch Allyn. The delicious lunch was diligently prepared by Clinical School staff and cooked by Med 3 students (Matt Stanowski, Michael Bakunowicz and Vincent Seah) and watched by Biren Singh.



Our E.O., Denise Thornhill chats to Dr Ian Tait and Dr Mark Graydon, who are 2 of our tutors



Prof. James Wiley chatting to one of our tutors, retired surgeon Dr. Miller.



Med 3 Students - Matt Stanowski cooked while Michael Bakunowicz, Vincent Seah, Paul Savage and Will Dey supervised



Maree Yabsley, Leta Van de Wal, Lynne Gallaty, Biren Singh, Tracy Mockford and Susan Dowd from our Clinical School enjoying the occasion

Each Discipline Head was asked to give an overview of their discipline and the research opportunities available for students. Professor Ralph Nanan led this informal discussion during lunch and then Professor James Wiley, Dr. Stephen Fuller, Professor Vldan Starcevic, Associate Professor Peter Dietz and Dr Bernard Champion addressed the students. Students were also introduced to some of the Senior Lecturers and Clinical tutors including Dr Sally Poulton, Dr Jeffrey Fletcher, Dr Tony Liu, Dr Grant Miller, Dr Mark Graydon, Dr Ian Tait and Dr Bill Brakoulias.

Positive feedback from students and staff suggested that the orientation day was a success and this was attributable to the contributions made by everyone involved.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the staff from Sydney West Area Health service who willingly gave their time to assist in orientation of Med 1 students. Thank you to Colin Anlezark, Tony Lawson, Robert Robinson, Rachel Olliffe, Sue Grimes, Margot Drake, Isabel Watson, Bobby Lee, Natalie Saad, Steve Matthews, Jo Trunzo-Raphael and Security staff.

Marilyn Reed (Clinical Educator / Med 1 Coordinator)



Med 1 getting to know each other



A/P Peter Dietz at the Med 1 Welcome lunch



Med 1 practicing their fine motor skills



Med 1 practicing their co-ordination and balance

Alison (Sally) Poulton

I am Dr Alison Poulton, usually called Sally. I have just been appointed senior lecturer after working as a consultant paediatrician at Nepean for 10 years and carrying out clinical research in my private practice. My research interest involves looking at the effect of stimulant medication, used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), on growth and physical maturation in children. This has been a controversial area for more than 30 years due to conflicting results in previously published studies. I have reviewed the literature extensively and noted a consistent pattern of growth attenuation in the better quality studies.

I am currently involved in a long term study looking prospectively at body composition, rate of progression of skeletal maturation and attainment of puberty in children on stimulant medication. I will be presenting some preliminary results on body composition at the Spring Meeting of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health in York in March.

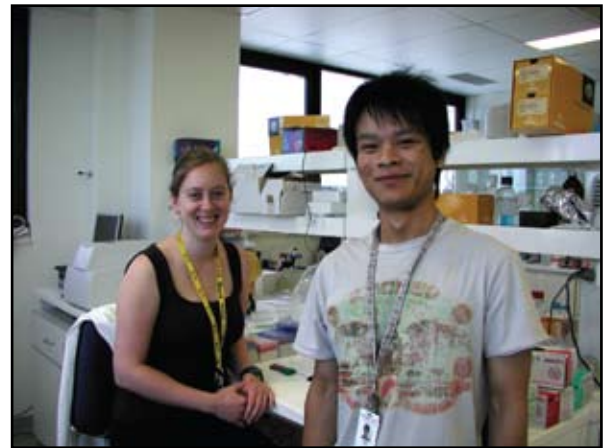


Jimmy Tran

My name is Jimmy Tran and I am currently doing a BSci(vet), which is confusingly separate but related to the BVetSci (from which vets graduate).

The BSci(vet) is a single research year which can be done by BVetSci students after either the 3rd or 4th year of the extraneously long 5 year degree. I'd had enough after 3 years. Now I'm researching the P2X7 receptor on langerhan cells in mice skin under the supervision of Dr Ron Sluyter. We hope that the research substantiates (or not) the use of mice as models for the study of P2X7 in human skin as well as adding to our basic understanding of this receptor. I hope the experiments go well and that any failure is not due to operator error. My particular interests are varied and vague. I like animals, obviously.

Cheers,
Jimmy Tran



Dr Jeff Fletcher

Dr Jeff Fletcher joined Nepean hospital as a staff specialist paediatrician in 2007. Dr Fletcher has an interest in Paediatric Nephrology and genetic kidney disease. Jeff received a Postgraduate Medical NHMRC scholarship in 2005 for PhD studies and is currently in the third year of his PhD (Part-time) focussing on chronic renal injury – genetic and immunological approaches. His PhD study is investigating genetic aspects and mechanisms of several paediatric renal diseases including paediatric kidney cancers. He is also interested in researching the association of single nucleotide polymorphisms with chronic allograft nephropathy in renal transplantation. He has established a paediatric kidney gene bank at the Children's Hospital at Westmead with Dr Stephen Alexander in the hope to improve research into genetic renal disease in Australia.



Leanne Stokes

Dr. Leanne Stokes arrived here in January from Sheffield, England. Leanne did her PhD at Birmingham University on 'Calcium Channels in Lymphocytes' then did a Post-Doc in Sheffield for three years on P2X7 and P2X4 and is here for one or more years working with Prof. Jim Wiley's haematology group.

Congratulations Ron

Note of Achievement:

Ron Sluyter was recently awarded a travel grant (\$9,300) by the Australian Academy of Sciences to visit the laboratory of Dr. Giel Bosman, University of Nijmegen, Nijmegen, The Netherlands to conduct research relating to P2X7 and red blood cells for 5 weeks this spring.



The Gastroenterology Research Unit at Nepean Hospital and Professor Nick Talley.

Nick Talley was appointed Foundation Professor at The Nepean Hospital in 1993, and served the University of Sydney and the hospital full time until 2002. Nick is now a University of Sydney Visiting Professor of Medicine at Nepean Hospital. He is currently based in the USA, where he is Professor of Medicine at the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and, in 2007, Chair of Internal Medicine at Mayo Clinic Jacksonville. He has remained active in Sydney, returning to Nepean Hospital regularly each year to supervise and review research projects being undertaken by PhD students and visiting scientists.

The Nepean GI Research Unit continues to be a very successful venture; it has attracted major NH&MRC funding as well as industry support, and conducts internationally recognized research. The research efforts have focused on a number of different problems. His group has helped to define the role of glucose control, psychological distress and damage to the autonomic nerves in causing gastrointestinal disease in diabetes. He has led international research teams evaluating the importance of gastro-oesophageal reflux and Barrett's oesophagus, a pre-cancerous disease, in the community. Work at Nepean Hospital identified for the first time that there is a genetic component in the irritable bowel syndrome, and currently the search for candidate genes is continuing with some early successes. A widely praised quality of life instrument, the Nepean Dyspepsia Index (NDI) was developed and validated at the Nepean Hospital after which it was named. The NDI was the first disease specific measure in dyspepsia, and has since been used in many large multicenter clinical trials worldwide. Other areas of recent research interest have included non-cardiac chest pain, obesity, and *Helicobacter pylori* and stomach cancer.

Nick's team published over 250 papers between 1993 and 2002. The GI Research Unit remains a close knit team, and his group continues to publish in the best journals regularly. He works closely with other gastroenterologists at Nepean Hospital including Associate Professor Martin Weltman, Dr. Nghi Phung and Dr. Jim Kalantar, and epidemiologist Dr. Guy Eslick, a former PhD student. The GI Society of Australia recently recognized Nick's contribution to Australian GI research by awarding him the Distinguished Research Prize in October, 2006 in Adelaide.

Nick continues to be passionate about teaching, and a number of his textbooks are recommended in medical schools around Australia and worldwide. He also values life outside medicine, and continues to be engaged in playing golf, running, skiing, boating and the martial arts.

Maryam Shabake.

Maryam is employed here as a Research Assistant in the department of Gastroenterology under the supervision of Prof. Nick Talley.

She is also in her final year of her PhD in the field of Sensory Perception, in the Department of Psychological Nursing at UWS in conjunction with the Randwick Children's Hospital and NSW University



Maryam Shabbake



Some of the Gastroenterology group from right to left.... Dr. Guy Eslick, Nghi Phung, Prof. Nick Talley, Li Zhang and Dr. Jim Kalantar

Professor Chris Martin

A follow up to the announcement of the passing of Professor Christopher John Martin (10.6.1948 - 7.11.2006)

Professor Chris Martin's Widow, Margie pledged money to the Nepean Medical Research Foundation in lieu of flowers raising \$10,530.00.

All money received will be directed into projects reflective of Professor Martin's research pursuits.

Karen Palluzzano pledged money raised in lieu of flowers, to the Nepean Medical Research Foundation, In Memory of Mrs Elda Nassivera. \$1,115.00 was raised for medical research at Nepean Hospital.

Donations are still welcome.

Please contact **Lynne Gallaty** by email on -gallatl@med.usyd.edu.au

Lisa Vacarro

I have worked in the Department of Surgery (Nepean Hospital) as the Late Professor Christopher Martin's Research Assistant, since 1999.

During this time we contributed to the development of an Australasian collaborative of specialists with an interest in oesophageal diseases – "The International Society for Diseases of the Oesophagus - Australasian Section" (ISDEAS, and In 2004 we coordinated the biannual ISDEAS conference at Bondi Beach.

Out of this collaboration many internationally reputed multicentre clinical trials have developed.

I will be leaving shortly to continue the day to day running of one of these trials at Royal North Shore Hospital, with Dr Garrett Smith (who by coincidence was the most recent PhD graduate under the supervision of the Late Professor Christopher Martin).

As I already have a 4 year degree in Psychology, I am also leaving to pursue my

own academic and research career. I will be doing this via a PhD Scholarship within the Discipline of Behavioural and Community Health Sciences, University of Sydney (Cumberland). Part of my PhD will include working on an NHMRC funded project "The nature and management of obsessive compulsive checking".



Lisa Vacarro



A/P John Cartmill teaching knots to Med 3



A/P John Cartmill teaching sewing techniques to Med 3

Cathy Dunn and Matthew

I'm a Research Midwife, working under Professor Peek, Associate Dean and Head of School, Nepean Clinical School, Sydney University/ Nepean Hospital, and had my son Matthew on 22/8/06 (he is 3 months in the photo).

I'm involved in recruiting and data collecting for 3 multi centre studies. The studies include; "Birth after caesarean", "Premature Prelabour Rupture of Membranes Close to Term", and "The Progress Study", giving progesterone or placebo to women in their next pregnancy who have had a spontaneous preterm birth. Two of the studies are coordinated with Adelaide University, Adelaide Women and Children's Hospital and the other study is coordinated with Royal North Shore Hospital.



Cathy Dunn and Matthew

Phuong Dao-Ung.

Phuong Dao-Ung has been employed as a hospital scientist to run the diagnostic flow cytometry unit in Pathology since February 1989. Since then she was also a key member of the Haematology research team, lead by Professor James Willey with the aim to complete her PhD program. Her project focussed on the P2X7 receptor function and its clinical relevance in chronic lymphocytic leukaemia (CLL) and Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma (NHL). In December 2005 Phuong had a baby girl, Adeline Ung, thus was away from her research work for a year. We are all happy to welcome Phuong back to work earlier this year on a part-time basis. We all wish the best with the completion of her degree.



Phuong and Adeline

PSYCHOLOGICAL MEDICINE

We are growing!

The Academic Department of Psychological Medicine has grown exponentially over the last several months! Pauline Fenech, our Research Assistant, joined the Department in July 2006, and Dr Vlasios (Bill) Brakoulias, Staff Specialist Psychiatrist and Clinical Lecturer, came on board in January 2007. This is exciting news for academic activities in psychological medicine and mental health in general, as it will allow the Department to focus even more on research and teaching.

Teaching

With the emergence of an independent Nepean Clinical School and arrival of Dr Brakoulias, all medical student teaching in the course of the Psychological Medicine and Drug and Alcohol Medicine rotation will now take place at the Department, in Nepean Hospital and affiliated hospitals and mental health services. The Department is involved in revising the curriculum in Psychological Medicine and changing the structure of the student rotation.

Research, publications and other activities

The main area of research in the Department in 2006 has been the cognitive styles and constructs in anxiety disorders. Several publications have resulted from this research:

- Starcevic V, Berle D (2006). Cognitive specificity of anxiety disorders: A review of selected key constructs. *Depression and Anxiety*, 23:51-61.
- Starcevic V, Latas M, Kolar D, Berle D. Are there gender differences in catastrophic appraisals in panic disorder with agoraphobia? *Depression and Anxiety* (in press).
- Starcevic V, Berle D, Milicevic D, Hannan A, Lamplugh C, Eslick GD. Pathological worry, anxiety disorders and the impact of co-occurrence with depressive and other anxiety disorders. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders* (in press).

A/Professor Starcevic has also been involved in an international study on the effects of abrupt alprazolam discontinuation and anxiety-relevant cognitive style in panic disorder patients, the results of which were published in 2006:

- Uhlenhuth EH, Starcevic V, Qualls C, Antal EJ, Matuzas W, Javaid JI, Barnhil J (2006). Abrupt discontinuation of alprazolam and cognitive style in patients with panic disorder: Early effects on mood, performance, and vital signs. *Journal of Clinical Psychopharmacology*, 26:519-523.

A/Professor Starcevic organised and chaired a symposium "Thresholds and Limits of Somatization and Hypochondriasis", at the World Psychiatric Association Juan J. Lopez Ibor Centennial Congress in Madrid, Spain in April 2006. He was also invited to write an editorial for the journal *Psychosomatics* on current issues in classifying somatoform disorders (Starcevic V [2006]. Somatoform disorders and DSM-V: Conceptual and political issues in the debate. *Psychosomatics*, 47:277-281) and to write a commentary for the journal *Evidence-based Mental Health* on a systematic review of the epidemiology of anxiety disorders (Starcevic V [2006].

Commentary to "Prevalence and incidence studies of anxiety disorders: A systematic review of the literature". *Evidence-Based Mental Health*, 9:115).

In addition, A/Professor Starcevic was asked to co-author an article for the *Continuous Medical Education Journal Psychiatric Annals*:

- Lipsitt DR, Starcevic V (2006). Psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy in the treatment of somatoform disorders. *Psychiatric Annals*, 36:341-348.

More reviews of A/Professor Starcevic's book *Anxiety Disorders in Adults: A Clinical Guide* appeared in 2006. Below is a review that was published in the journal *Australasian Psychiatry*.



Prof. Starcevic and Dr Brakoulias

VLASIOS BRAKOULIAS.

Dr Brakoulias is a newly appointed staff specialist and clinical lecturer in Psychiatry working with the Department of Psychological Medicine at the Nepean Clinical School. He has completed advanced training in Psychotherapy and his interests include belief formation and modification, obsessive-compulsive disorder, delusions, cognitive behavioural therapy, family therapy, and psychodynamic therapy. Dr Brakoulias has just completed a prestigious twelve month fellowship awarded by the NSW Institute of Psychiatry where he assessed psychotherapeutic approaches for patients suffering from delusions. He is also a recent co-recipient of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists Young Investigator Grant. He has published in the area of deliberate self-harm as part of his Masters of Psychiatry degree. Dr Brakoulias works as a consultant at the Pialla Unit and pursues his academic interests within the Department of Psychological Medicine under the supervision of A/Professor Vladan Starcevic. Dr Brakoulias will continue to assess beliefs ranging from delusions, over-valued ideas and obsessions. He plans to complete a PhD looking at symptom based subtypes of obsessive-compulsive disorder.

The Nepean Medical Research Foundation

Last years successful NMRF ball in November has put the NMRF into hyperdrive and here is a list of the functions this year.

Upcoming Dates:

Wednesday 28 March - Cocktail party held for the Philanthropists at Gwen McMaster-Fay's home.

Tuesday 24 April - Pollie Pedal Breakfast Barbeque at the International Regatta Centre, Penrith Lakes

Monday 16 April - Drawing of the Val Stewart raise money for cancer research raffle by Professor J Wiley/Professor M Peek at Nepean Hospital

Thursday 10 May - Val Stewart Morning Tea held to raise money for cancer research

Thursday 24 May - Isobel Corin Research Awards to be held in the Level 2, Lecture Theatre, Nepean Hospital from 12.20 - 12.40

(Between speakers at Medical Grand Rounds which start at 1pm -2pm).

Saturday 25 August - Mayoral Ball

Saturday 3 November - Dinner at the Great Hall for the Philanthropists

The 5 Isobel Corin Award Recipients for 2006 were:

Dr Bamini Gopinath awarded \$4,550.00 to attend the 77th Annual Meeting of the American Thyroid Association in Phoenix in October 2006.

Dr Clara Shek awarded \$2,100.00 to attend the International Continence Society Conference in Christchurch NZ in November 2006.

Dr Ron Sluyter awarded \$1,800.00 to attend 36th Annual Australasian Society for Immunology in Auckland in December 2006.

Dr Benjamin Tang awarded \$5,628.00 to attend the Discovery to Diagnosis Conference in Boston.

Dr Guy Eslick awarded \$2,000.00 to attend Digestive Disease Week in Washington in May 2007.

There will be \$5,000.00 awarded in 2007.

Mr Leon Wescombe is in his second year of his PhD which NMRF are funding \$25,000.00 a year for three years

For enquiries, please contact Lynne Gallaty by email -gallat@med.usyd.edu.au

Thankyou

The Council of the Nepean Medical Research Foundation would like to thank the Glenbrook Panthers Women's Bowling Club and their supporters most sincerely for their generous donation which will be paid into an account directed towards children's research as requested in your letter to us.

Isobel Corin Award Report: 36th Annual Australasian Society for Immunology Conference, 3-7 December 2007, Auckland, New Zealand

The Isobel Corin Award allowed me to attend this year's annual Australian Society for Immunology Conference, Auckland. Without this funding I would have been unable to attend, and I am extremely grateful to the Foundation for its support. Immunology is the studying of the body's immune system which is made up of white blood cells and specialized hormones (called cytokines). The immune system is essential in protecting the body from infection and cancer. When the immune system misbehaves it gives rise to allergies (asthma,

hayfever and dermatitis) and autoimmune diseases (eg: arthritis, lupus, multiple sclerosis).

The conference was represented by over 360 scientists and boasted many of the best immunologists from across Australia and New Zealand, as well as a dozen overseas scientists who are world leaders in their respective immunological disciplines. The conference theme was "Immunology: From the bench to the clinic" and I acquired a wealth of new knowledge which has given rise to a number of ideas and lines of pursuit to apply to my own study of the P2X7 receptor, a molecule present on white blood cells and important in immunity. The conference also allowed me to interact, exchange ideas and make contact with both new and old scientists.

At the conference I gave an oral presentation where I presented our recent findings describing how the P2X7 receptor is controlled by the cell and the identification of novel chemicals which inhibit the receptor's function. Our novel observations may help in the development of new anti-inflammatory drugs for use in treating allergies and autoimmune diseases.

Dr. Ronald Sluyter

Report for Isobel Corin Research Award from the Nepean Medical Research Foundation

The Isobel Corin Research Award provided financial assistance for travel to Phoenix, Arizona in the United States to give an oral presentation for the 77th Annual Meeting of the American Thyroid Association. The title of my presentation was: 'Study of serum antibodies against three eye muscle antigens and the connective tissue antigen collagen XIII in patients with Graves' disease with and without ophthalmopathy - correlation with clinical features.' This presentation was based on the past years work which provided novel and exciting evidence for specific and sensitive diagnostic markers (i.e. calsequestrin and collagen XIII antibodies) of thyroid associated ophthalmopathy or the 'poppy eyes' associated with thyroid autoimmune disorders. This meeting provided a forum for me to present this exciting new data to a varied audience of clinicians and scientific researchers and their resulting input was valuable for future work into this area of ophthalmopathy. In addition, presenting in front of such a large and distinguished audience was both an invaluable and rewarding experience.

The other seminars and presentations (both oral and poster) that I attended were both interesting and made me realise the amazing amount of work going on in this area. Social events such as a 'barbecue under the stars' and the annual banquet dinner were both enjoyable and presented an opportunity to network and form new contacts with researchers in the same field of thyroid autoimmunity. All in all, attending the annual meeting in Phoenix was both memorable and valuable to my future ongoing research and something that I would not have been able to experience if it was not for the generosity of the Nepean Medical Research Foundation who funded my travel to this conference.

Dr. Bamini Gopinath

Report on the trip to ICS 2006 Christchurch

The ICS 2006 took place in Christchurch, New Zealand from 27 November to 1 December, 2006. Programs on the first 2 days were composed of educational courses and workshops. I attended 2 workshops: Update on the management of overactive bladder syndrome and Repair of 3rd, 4th degree tear and 2 educational courses: Evaluation of the pelvic floor musculature and More than just a barrier: urothelium as a drug target for urinary bladder pain. These courses and workshops provided current concepts and findings of a number of problems in female urology and urogynaecology. Furthermore it was an opportunity for me to gain a better understanding about how the physiotherapists evaluated the pelvic floor muscle which is one of my research interest. Physiotherapists were interested in the recent findings of levator avulsion injury with imaging and its association with pelvic organ prolapse as shown by Professor HP Dietz and others. However currently the integrity of pelvic floor muscle is not usually considered and assessed by physiotherapists. Further work is needed to show whether major avulsion can be picked up digitally and its significance in pelvic floor muscle rehabilitation.

Plenary presentation, State of the Art Lecture and poster presentation were scheduled on Day 3 to 5. Our poster titled Transobturator mesh repair for large and recurrent cystoceles was scheduled for oral presentation on Day 3. The audiences were interested in our study. They raised questions about the mesh erosion rate and patient satisfaction rate. After the session, I shared my 3D ultrasound scanning experience with a Swedish gynaecologist who was interested in my work and was planning to undergo a research to study shrinkage of the perigee mesh post operation using the same imaging technique.

In our study, we found a significant percentage of cases with urinary stress incontinence before the operation improved or cured after the Perigee mesh procedure. In one of the non discussion posters, another group of researchers also showed a similar finding after a different type of transobturator mesh. It was interesting. This finding may change our clinical practice. I am now writing a full paper of my study, I will take a closer look at this part of the data to see if any suggestion or conclusion can be made.

The trip to Christchurch was a fruitful one. I presented the medium term results of the Perigee transobturator mesh for cystocele repair which involves a new technique in mesh anchoring. Our results showed that it was a safe and effective procedure. However in the presentation I also pointed out the problem of the system. I showed the audiences a video clip of a patient with cystocele recurrence associated with dislodgement of the superior anchoring arms and suggested that it could be a cause of recurrence. This finding was probably the world first presented in an international conference which alerted clinicians to the potential problem of the system. Further work should be done to suggest remedial measures or even modification of the system's design.

The more we learn, the more we find ourselves inadequate and deficient. There is still a lot of work ahead. The Christchurch trip reminded me of this and that we have to work harder and do more.

*Clara Shek
Pelvic Floor Fellow
O&G Department
Nepean Hospital*

POLLIE PEDAL 2007 - Brisbane to Sydney 1, 151km

For the past nine years, a group of politicians, sportspeople and community representatives have made a long distance bike ride to raise money for charity.

The tenth annual Pollie Pedal will begin in Brisbane on April 15 next year and will raise money for breast cancer research at Westmead Hospital's Millennium Research Institute. About 14,000 Australian women are diagnosed with breast cancer each year and with your support we can boost funds to leading researchers studying the causes and treatments of this disease.

Since the ride began, Pollie Pedallers have ridden 10,000km to raise almost one million dollars for organisations such as the Royal Flying

Doctor Service, Ronald McDonald House, Youth Insearch, the Paralympic Games as well as medical research into childhood leukaemia and diabetes. Thanks to our sponsors, Pollie Pedal 2006 raised a record \$320,000 for diabetes research.

We are hoping to better that record this year.

A number of Federal Ministers will join in the ride as well as MPs, local mayors, sportspeople and members of local communities. Past participants include Mark Vaile, Tony Abbott, Kevin Andrews, Jim Lloyd, Sussan Ley, Pat Farmer, John Anderson, Jackie Kelly, Phil Barresi, Luke Hartsuyker, Louise Markus and Senator Guy Barnett.

For more information contact Kate Miranda in Tony Abbott's office on 0417 422 291.



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NEWS

Nepean Clinical School

New Titles :

Professor Anthony McLean – Clinical Professor in Critical Care
Dr. Sally Poulton – Senior Lecturer in Paediatrics
Dr. Jeffery Fletcher – Clinical Senior Lecturer in Paediatrics
Dr. Stuart Lane – Senior Lecturer in Critical Care

New Faces :

Dr. Vlasios (Bill) Brakoulias – Staff Specialist Psychiatrist and Clinical Lecturer
Maryam Shahbake – Research Officer in Gastroenterology
Leanne Stokes – Research Fellow in Haematology

Correction:

Ryan Stevenson – Honours (BAnVetSioSc) student in Haematology

Farewells :

Ms. Lisa Vacarro – Research Assistant in Surgery

Contact for the Clinical school Newsletter :

Ms. Susan Dowd
Research Support Officer
Nepean Clinical School
Level 5, South Block, Nepean Hospital
PO Box 63, Penrith, 2751
Email : sdowd@med.usyd.edu.au

Ph. : (02) 4734 2682

Fax : (02)4734 1817

Contact for The Nepean Medical Research Foundation:

Lynne Gallaty by email on - gallatl@med.usyd.edu.au or nmrf@med.usyd.edu.au

Ph : (02) 4734 2584

Fax : (02) 4734 1817

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