June 2016

Following a ten year term as Associate Dean and Head of School at Sydney Medical School -Westmead, Prof David Harris will be stepping down at the end of June 2016. In part, the change is to facilitate his role of President of the International Nephrology Society, which commences in 2017.

David will continue to work at Westmead and Blacktown Hospitals as an academic, nephrologist and as Head of Dialysis and Nephrology. He will have a new office located down the other end of the Clinical Sciences corridor.

We will be extremely sad to see Prof Harris leave, after a successful and challenging time at the helm which kept the school on course in providing excellent opportunities for our doctors of the future.

Congratulations also to Prof Harris for his 2016 Distinguished Professorial Award for his outstanding contributions to medical research in Australia, as well as his contributions to academia and service to the community.

We wish Prof Harris every success with his next venture

Prof will hand the reins to the new Associate Dean and Head of School, Professor Tania Sorrell, and the Deputy Head of School, Prof Richard Allen. We look forward to the next new and exciting chapter of the clinical school (see article on page 2).

**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY....**

**Summative Long Case Exams:**
9, 10 & 16, 17 August 2016

**Hospital Week:**
24, 25 & 26 August 2016
Welcome...

We are pleased to announce that Professor Tania Sorell has accepted the position of Head of Westmead Clinical School. Tania will continue in her role on the Faculty Executive as Deputy Dean with portfolio responsibilities that will focus on the redevelopment of the Westmead Precinct. She will also continue as Director of the Marie Bashir Institute for Infectious Diseases and Biosecurity.

Welcome also to Professor Richard Allen, who has accepted the position of Deputy Head of Westmead Clinical School. Richard is Professor of Transplantation Surgery with a longstanding professional affiliation at Westmead, and until recently he was also Director of Transplantation Services at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

Tania’s and Richard’s appointments are for the two years to June 2018. Leadership arrangements beyond that time are expected to depend on the nature of the new Faculty structure.

Prof Sorell will shortly appoint a person responsible for Teaching. We hope to have this person on board mid-August.

Staff Moves...

Please note that Izam Mujir, Angela Wallace and Sophie Cher will be relocating to Room #2016 which is located in the clinical sciences corridor.

Phone and email contact details will remain as current.

Queen’s Birthday Honours...

Congratulations to the following Westmead colleagues on receiving awards in the Queen’s Birthday Honours:

- **Professor Richard Bryant AC** - for eminent service to medical research in the field of psychotraumatology, as a psychologist and author, to the study of Indigenous mental health, as an advisor to a range of government and international organisations, and to professional societies.

- **Professor Nick Dorsch AM** for significant service to medicine as a neurosurgeon; to medical education and training, both nationally and internationally, and to research.

- **Emeritus Professor John Fletcher AM** - for significant service to medicine as a vascular surgeon; to medical education as an academic, and to professional associations.

- **Dr John Swinnen OAM** - for service to medicine, particularly through international humanitarian roles.
**Congratulations...**

**Professor Clara Chow** has been appointed as the academic co-director of the new Charles Perkins Centre, which was launched at Westmead on 23 May 2016.

This position is shared with Professor Maria Craig, who is a professor of paediatric endocrinology.

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**Publications...**

Congratulations to Dr Andrew Chen (Dermatology Registrar), Dr Robyn Dalziell (Clinical School) and colleagues from Central Clinical School, RPAH, the CTC and main campus for the following recent publications in the *British Journal of Dermatology* covering important findings for high risk skin cancer patients.


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**Appointments & Promotions...**

Congratulations also to the following colleagues on their recent promotions or appointments:

- Clinical Associate Professor Nimala Pathmanathan;
- Clinical Senior Lecturer Nim Geerevasinga;
- Clinical Senior Lecturer Neil Sharma;
- Clinical Senior Lecturer Eric Kit Chung Hau;
- Honorary Associate John Morris; and
- Clinical Associate Lecturer Thomas Oh

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**Teacher of the Quarter...**

Westmead Clinical School students, from Years 1-4, were asked to nominate their favourite teacher in recognition of their contribution to student teaching during the past quarter.

We are pleased to announce that, from a competitive field of nominations, **Dr Alex Doig (ED)**, has been nominated as the Teacher of the Quarter for June 2016.

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**Call for Volunteer Facilitators...**

The Pam McLean Centre (PMC) is based at Royal North Shore Hospital in the Sydney Medical School Northern. We have a pool of professional actors who
are trained in medical scenarios that allow students and graduate doctors the opportunity to explore simulations involving challenging communications.

Each year PMC conducts Stage 1 tutorial sessions, called “Dealing with Bad News” (DBN), and Stage 2 sessions called “Aversive Procedures” (AP), at each of the clinical schools – RPAH, Concord, RNSH, Westmead, Nepean, SAN. These sessions have received rave reviews from students for more than 10 years.

The Stage 1 DBN tutorials are a prelude to learning how to break bad news, using a situation that is real and relevant for first year students at that stage of their learning. They are given the task of taking a history from an actor/patient (something they do every week in their clinical school days) but this patient is very emotional because they have just been given a diagnosis of lymphoma. The task then becomes dealing with the patient’s emotional state. There are four students in a group and they spend 30 minutes with each of four patients; each patient expresses a different emotion. The students can start and stop the scene at any point and seek feedback from the patient. The role of the facilitator in each group of four is to help the students to explore the situation, to elicit feedback, and to develop strategies for managing patients’ emotional states. The facilitators are not there as content experts, their role is to facilitate, not to teach.

The Stage 2 AP tutorials provide a similar small-group experience focusing on Aversive Procedures. Prior to the session, students are required to research a particular aversive procedure and be prepared to explain the procedure to an actor/patient. This is not formal consent. The students practice how to communicate information to a patient who may be anxious and ill-informed. They explore factors such as the use of diagrams and the impact of their choice of words on patients’ understanding. Again, the facilitator is not meant to be a content expert, their role is to facilitate.

**Facilitator training is scheduled on Monday, 15 August and tutorial dates commence end August through to late October 2016.**

The following link gives further insight to the facilitation experience:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1R5eq0Qc/c

Students value the input of experienced clinicians and we are always keen to find volunteer facilitators.

Staff who would like to participate are encouraged to contact PMC via email sms.pmc.admin@sydney.edu.au or phone 02 9926 4691.

Thank you for considering this teaching opportunity for 2016 and future years.

**Emergency Medicine Interest Group (EMIG)**

EMIG, Westmead’s Emergency Medicine Interest Group, has been going steady, holding a workshop a month.

During April, the Not-So-Grand-Rounds were presented by ED doctors and Stage 3 students. An audience of medical, nursing, and elective students delved into some complex cases, putting theory into
practice, and gaining insight into clinical thinking in emergency medicine. Overall, it was very educational, and EMIG would like to thank all ED doctors and Stage 3 students who took time out to prepare for the event.

During June, the toxicology workshop saw a wide range of everyday items brought in by ED toxicologist, Dr Naren Gunja, from plants and teas, to button batteries and a funnel web spider. The common thread amongst them was their potential to kill.

In a series of scenario based stations, students were invited to examine the materials, touching and smelling them to try and identify what the substance was, and the mechanisms in which they were poisonous.

With the help of ED staff specialists, they tested their knowledge at recognising the causes of symptoms such as confusion, tachycardia, blindness and fever. ECG reading skills were put to use, and students witnessed the severity of injury that button batteries can actually cause. All students agreed it was a very relevant and worthwhile workshop, with many surprised at the ease with which these poisons could be found in everyday life. The workshop enabled the students to better recognise different forms of poisoning, and to know what actions they could take in such events.

During May, EMIG hosted another successful event; the prehospital workshop. On two separate evenings, Stage 1 and 2 students learned about what they can do during an emergency outside the hospital, what a career of a pre-hospital emergency doctor involves, as well as hearing stories from past emergencies. Students also learned about prehospital care from the viewpoint of a paramedic and got to see the inside of an ambulance and its contents. EMIG would like to thank all the doctors and paramedics who volunteered their time for this event.

**EMIG’s Not-So-Grand Rounds case titled ‘Diagnosing Bad Luck’, presented by 4th year student, Umberto Paolo Villa**

What’s inside an ambulance? Ambulance Office Brian Parsell shows students how patients are managed en route to the Emergency Department.
This quarter, we particularly require tutors for:

- Long Case Summative Examiners;
- Clinical Reasoning Session (CRS) facilitators;
- Communication skills and history taking (Med 1 & 2) for the upcoming blocks
- Procedural skills.

Thank you to all those junior and senior doctors who are assisting our students in practising their long case skills.

Thank you also to the many new and enthusiastic interns who are making themselves available to assist us with procedural skills teaching. We greatly appreciate their support.

Postgraduate Student Unit...

PG Research Seminars
Congratulations to our PG Research Seminar Winners! They will move forward to compete for the ‘Young Investigator Awards’ to be held in November.

- April - Monica Basuki (Immunology)
- May - Andrea Lawrence (Medical Entomology)
- June - Ali Azimi (Dermatology)

Lucky Door Prize winners – Ravi Dotel (CIDM), Monica Basuki (Immunology), Jacqueline Saad (BDU), Barbara Withers (CCR), Ming-Celine Dubosq (CCR), and Dinh Trang Van (CIDM)
Congratulations to our winners, both presentation and lucky door, and thank you to those students who supported the seminars thus far.

**AWARDS**

**Christopher Denes** (CVR) was awarded the 2015 'Janssen-Cilag Prize' from the University's School of Molecular Bioscience which is awarded annually to the student enrolled in Honours in Microbiology with the best overall performance.

**PUBLICATIONS**


**Abstract** Atrial Fibrillation (AF) is one of the most common types of cardiac arrhythmias experienced in clinical practice, increasing the risk of stroke, dementia, myocardial infarction and death. Currently available options for the treatment of AF use either pharmacological agents or catheter-based ablation therapies to restore sinus rhythm or control the ventricular response rate. These current treatment options are suboptimal at best, motivating research into discovering more effective and innovative ways to treat AF. Gene therapy is being explored for its potential to treat various human conditions including cardiac arrhythmias. Gene transfer vectors with increasing transduction efficiency and biosafety have been developed and trialled for cardiovascular disease treatment. With an improved understanding of the molecular mechanisms of AF, several gene therapy targets have been identified and evaluated in an attempt to rate or rhythm control the heart during AF. This review will discuss the gene therapy vectors in use today and methods for delivery of these vectors to the atrium. Further, it will evaluate several gene therapy strategies and approaches for sinus rhythm restoration and ventricular rate control that have the potential to emerge as a therapy for AF.

Farzan Bahin (Storr Liver Centre / Endoscopy) for his numerous publications over the past few months. Great work!!


International Medical Student Elective Report...

Yuan Yuh (Elys) Leong
National University of Singapore
May 2016
I was attached to the Breast Surgery team in Westmead Hospital, Sydney, for three weeks as part of my electives. The Breast team was extremely friendly and keen to teach. In my placement with them, I had the opportunity to participate in ward rounds, observe and assist in clinics and operations and attend multidisciplinary meetings for cancer patients. The team treated me as one of their own, and was keen to let me take up responsibility in
managing patients. The hospital also organized Medical Grand Rounds that were opened for all who were interested. The cases presented were mind-boggling but well delivered. In all, the placement program had been an eye-opening and academically stimulating experience. I have gained much from the exposure and teachings.

Outside of work, I spent most of my time with my new friends. As international students here on placements were mostly housed in a common accommodation, we had plenty of opportunities to interact. It was easy to arrange for meals, exercising, shopping, travelling and even going to church! Sydney became our playground and places that we explored together included the Blue Mountains, Bondi to Coogee beach, Manly Beach, the Opera House, the Harbour Bridge, the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney Olympic Park, Taronga Zoo and many more. We were also fortunate to be present for the opening night of Vivid! Sydney, and thoroughly enjoyed the atmosphere and the spectacular light show.

In fact, a few of us became inseparable as the days passed and I found myself spending most of my free time with them. We also came together on my last weekend at Westmead to cook a farewell feast in the pantry. Interestingly, the dinner became an amalgamation of different cuisines as we tried to replicate our favourite dishes from our home country.

To sum up, my three weeks at Westmead was a memorable experience that I will hold dear for the rest of my life. The program is well organized and allowed for a balance of both work and play. The administrative support was fantastic as well. A huge thank you to everyone who made this experience a great one and hope that we will meet again one day!