

Research UPDATE

SPRING 2007

Welcome from Professor Julie Campbell



*Professor Julie Campbell AO, FAA,
Director, The Wesley Research Institute*

Already we are almost three quarters of the way through 2007 – and hasn't it been a busy one for us all! The Wesley Research Institute continues to experience unparalleled growth in the number and scope of research projects and clinical trials that we conduct, as well as the physical expansion of the Institute.

There are a number of ways you can help the Institute during this massive period of growth. You can make an enormous difference by making a donation to a research area of your choice by completing the donation form on the back of this newsletter.

Another way you can help is by joining the Institute's research database. We are always looking for volunteers to participate in a wide variety of scientific studies and we have enclosed a form with this edition for your information.

Research helps create the greatest gift of all

One in six, or 15 per cent of Australian couples, will experience difficulties conceiving a child. Given the excitement and expectation people experience when planning for a baby, they can become understandably dismayed when there is no resulting pregnancy.

A new research project funded by The Wesley Research Institute is looking at a way to ease the very personal and disheartening dilemma of infertility for the thousands of Australians affected by the problem every year.

Dr John Allan, Chief Investigator of the project and Clinical Director of Wesley Monash IVF, is leading a team of researchers studying the infectious causes of infertility. The researchers will study women undergoing assisted reproductive technology who have a lower successful pregnancy rate and higher miscarriage rate due to the detection of bacteria and viruses.

The information gained from this project may lead to diagnostic tests for the rapid detection of infections in infertile women.

It is anticipated that this will result in earlier treatment to help patients overcome infertility and create one of the greatest gifts of all – a new life.



Dr John Allan

Leader in cancer treatment honoured



Dr Judy Bauer, researcher from The Wesley Research Institute and Smart State Clinical Research Fellow, was recently awarded an Acknowledgment

of Outstanding Contribution by the Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA).

Dr Bauer was instrumental in the development of evidence based guidelines for the management of cancer cachexia as a member of the Cancer Cachexia Steering Committee.

DAA President, Julie Hulcombe, said, "Dr Bauer is a leader in the area of cancer cachexia and her contribution to the Association and the profession is recognised nationally and internationally."

Cachexia is characterised by decreased appetite, loss of lean tissue and body fat, and changes to body metabolism. Cachexia is very common in people suffering pancreatic, lung, gastric and colorectal cancers, and significantly impairs their ability to fight these diseases.

Dr Bauer's current research at the Institute aims to develop a new nutrition treatment standard for patients with gynaecological cancer.

Past research has suggested 67 per cent of women undergoing chemotherapy or radiotherapy for ovarian cancer are malnourished, and as many die from wasting associated with severe malnutrition as from the cancer itself.

"I am delighted to accept this award from DAA. Hopefully this will mean that people from all over the world who suffer from cancer cachexia will have access to improved treatment and have better quality of life," Dr Bauer said.

Thank you to the Recent Major Supporters of The Wesley Research Institute

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Researchers tackle cervical cancer in Vanuatu

In a project funded by The Wesley Research Institute, Brisbane researchers are in Vanuatu studying low cost means to reduce the fatal effects of cervical cancer.

Cervical cancer is a major problem in Vanuatu and other developing nations, but lack of funding prevents women from having routine PAP smears.

Wesley Research Institute researchers, led by Chief Investigators Dr Margaret McAdam and Dr Scott Kitchener, are studying a rapid, low cost method of detection of cervical cancer in women from the island nation. This method is called VIA/VILI.

"Women in whom cervical cancer is detected are offered immediate treatment and as a result many women have already had their lives saved," Dr McAdam said.

"Initial results are positive which means that there is every chance the technique can be used to save countless more lives in other developing countries."

The project, in addition to evaluating VIA/VILI, will also teach local nurses to conduct the screening and treatment process themselves, and develop appropriate training and educational materials for the local women and nurses.



Vanatu nurses Marie, left, and Jerol, right, with Wesley Research Institute nurse Maree Griffiths

Acknowledgement of service



Mr Martin Albrecht AC, Mrs Roz Brand, Mr Peter Brand, Mrs Rosalie Martin AM, Mr John Martin, and Professor Julie Campbell AO

The Wesley Research Institute's two longest serving Board members were acknowledged at a surprise function at the Institute in July.

Peter Brand and Rosalie Martin AM were taken completely off guard by their fellow Board members and Institute staff at the special evening to recognise their combined 22 years of dedication and service of Board membership.

Peter is a distinguished pharmacist and Rosalie a retired stockbroker who has also served on the Board of The Wesley Hospital and has been awarded the Uniting Church's Moderator's Medal for Outstanding Community Service.

Chairman of the Institute, Martin Albrecht AC, told the informal gathering that Peter and Rosalie were continuing to make wonderful contributions not only to the Institute but also to the wider community.

"I'm proud to serve with such people who bring to the Board remarkable corporate knowledge, intellectual prowess and a depth of generosity," he said.

Special guest was local Member of State Parliament, the Hon Andrew Fraser MP, Minister for Local Government and the Member for Mt Coot-tha.

Improving patient outcomes a priority

A committee named the 'Patient Outcomes Research Committee' has recently been established to better facilitate research that translates directly into improvements to patient outcomes.

The committee is a joint initiative between The Wesley Research Institute and The Wesley Hospital. Chaired by Professor Patsy Yates, the committee's main agenda will be the overseeing of projects that identify clinical improvements and improve the quality and safety of patient care at The Wesley Hospital.

Clinical Trials Update

Study aims to lower the risk of stroke

The Wesley Research Institute Clinical Trials Centre is currently conducting a number of research studies for patients suffering from Atrial Fibrillation (AF). AF is an irregular heart rhythm (arrhythmia), which, if left untreated, can potentially lead to stroke and other major cardiac problems.

AF is one of the most common types of arrhythmia. It occurs in about two people in every 100 and its occurrence increases with age. Approximately 10 per cent of people over 80 years of age suffer from the condition.

One of the Institute's current studies is aiming to reduce the risk of stroke in patients with AF. Those at risk will be treated with blood thinners to help reduce the formation of blood clots, which in turn lowers their risk of suffering a stroke.

The Wesley Research Institute is always looking for new volunteers for clinical trials. If you would like to find out more information about these Atrial Fibrillation trials or others being conducted at the Institute, please visit www.wesleyresearch.org.au or phone 07 3232 7920.

2007 BIO International Convention



Premier Beattie with Institute and QCTN delegates

The Wesley Research Institute was recently invited to contribute to the 2007 BIO International Convention, produced by the Biotechnology Industry Organisation (BIO), held in Boston, Massachusetts in the USA.

The Convention is the world's largest event for the biotechnology industry. The Institute's world-class Clinical Trials Centre formed part of the Queensland Clinical Trials Network (QCTN) trade display, which focused on forging partnerships with national and international research organisations.

Premier Peter Beattie, a great supporter of the event, was in attendance visiting Queensland delegates. The event proved successful in helping to recognise Brisbane and the Institute as a competitive destination for undertaking clinical research.

Institute funds two new research projects

The Institute is pleased to announce the recent funding of two new research projects:

- **Dr Scott Sommerville – Preventing the spread of bone cancer.**

This project may lead to the first new treatment for osteosarcoma since the development of adjuvant chemotherapy. Osteosarcoma is the second most common primary cancer of the bone.

- **Professor Michael Schuetz – Prevention of bacterial bone infections.**

Bacterial bone infections are a major complication in the treatment of bone fractures. This project aims to demonstrate that novel antibiotic coatings on the surface of orthopaedic implants will dramatically reduce the rate of infection following surgery.

In addition to these recently funded projects, there are a further nine projects under consideration.

The gift that gives back

Do you know anyone who is having a birthday, wedding, anniversary or another special occasion?

In lieu of gifts, why not consider making a donation to The Wesley Research Institute to a research area of your choice. All gifts over \$2 are completely tax deductible.

It is not every day that you can give a gift that helps unravel the mysteries of illness and disease, ease pain and suffering, and save lives.

If you would like to make a donation on behalf of someone special or would like your friends and relatives to make a gift in lieu of presents for a special occasion you have coming up, please visit the Institute's website at www.wesleyresearch.org.au and follow the links to the Celebration Gifts section under 'How you can help'.



Scouting a better future

The Wesley Research Institute was recently announced by Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC as the recipient of a major fundraising project by Queensland Scouts to celebrate 100 years of Scouting in Queensland and Australia in 2008.



Mr Collin Myers, Mr Manfred Cross AM, Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC, and Mr Maurice Law AM

Ms Bryce, Governor and Chief Scout of Queensland, said the project would allow Scouts all over Queensland to make a positive and lasting difference to their local and ultimately, global community.

"This gesture captures everything that is most charitable, practical and forward-looking about our scouting movement," she said.

Professor Julie Campbell AO, FAA, Director of The Wesley Research Institute, said the Institute was extremely grateful to Scouts Queensland for their generous support.

"The funds raised by Scouts Queensland will help improve the lives of thousands of people across Australia and around the world," she said.

Chief Commissioner of Scouts Queensland, Mr Maurice Law AM, said that Queensland Scouts would be issued a challenge of raising \$1 million towards the Centenary Project over the course of next year.

Next year marks the centenary of Australian Scouting, and to commemorate this wonderful accomplishment the Federal Government has announced that 2008 will officially be "The Year of the Scout".



Mr Peter Vamvakaris and Professor Julie Campbell AO

A lasting legacy

Peter Vamvakaris, dedicated volunteer and supporter of The Wesley Research Institute, has focused his support on breast cancer research at the Institute in memory of his late wife Nina.

In gratitude for Peter and Nina's long-term support, the Institute recently dedicated part of its premises to Nina's memory in a moving presentation.

Peter said he was very happy that his wife was being honoured in this way.

"Nina didn't make it, but through medical research we can make a huge difference to the lives of so many people. This is why I am so passionately committed," he said.

Professor Julie Campbell AO, Director of The Wesley Research Institute, said that a plaque at the Institute will ensure that Nina's memory lives on.

Events Update

Westside Walk a wonderful success



The generosity of people in the Western suburbs had a chance to shine at the second annual Westside Walk held on Friday 18 May 2007.

The event, an initiative of Volunteering Queensland and Quest Newspapers, involved celebrities, politicians and

school children coming together in a walk from the City to Brookfield to raise valuable funds for 10 not-for-profit organisations in the area. The Institute was one of these lucky beneficiaries.

Walkers included Channel 7 newsreader Rod Young, whose enthusiasm made for very generous donations from retailers and shoppers along the way.

"The Westside Walk is a great opportunity for me to raise awareness of the benefits of walking and give local charities a boost," Rod said.

The Wesley Research Institute wishes to express its sincere thanks to all involved in making the day such a wonderful and worthwhile event.

Car Run for Research

On Sunday 20 May, more than one hundred people got all revved up at the 9th Annual Topless Car Run in support of breast cancer and cardiac research at The Wesley Research Institute.

The fun day featured a navigation run to a secret location, family barbeque, and major charity auction. The car run raised an event record of \$22,000 for the Institute, which will be directly applied to the Institute's important research programs.

The Institute would like to thank Dr Nigel and Mrs Desley Johnson, Heartbeats and the Loganholme Rotary Club for their extremely hard work and generous support.



Thank you for supporting medical research

Your support will have immediate benefits for people who need it most

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