

Research UPDATE

SUMMER 2007

Welcome from Professor Julie Campbell

The time has come again for a research update where we can share some of the wonderful progress the Institute has made in recent months. This edition profiles a new osteosarcoma project that offers enormous potential to sufferers of rare cancers, as well as a project that aims to reduce the rate of infection after orthopaedic implant surgery.



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

We also happily announce the appointment of the Institute's Ambassador, Mr Rod Young from 7 News Brisbane, and the launch of our Community Service Announcement which depicts how the Institute is helping to make a difference today, and is being aired regularly on Channel 7 free of charge.

It is also with a mixture of sadness and gratitude we announce the establishment of Hannah's Chance Foundation in memory of Hannah Ciobo who recently passed away from a rare sarcoma. May we all take great inspiration from Hannah's brave battle and her vision to raise funds for research to find a cure so others do not have to suffer.

The need is great for medical research that makes a difference for people like Hannah so I urge you to help the Institute in its important task by making a donation today. I wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy and healthy new year.

New project targets first significant osteosarcoma advancement in 20 years

The Wesley Research Institute has recently funded a research project aimed at developing the first significant new treatment of osteosarcoma in 20 years.



Dr Scott Sommerville

Osteosarcoma is the second most common primary cancer of the bone and the sixth most common type of cancer in children. The majority of patients afflicted with this disease are only in their teens and approximately 30 per cent of these patients will not survive this aggressive cancer. The primary cause of death is metastasis, or spread of the cancer.

Chief Investigator of the project, Dr Scott Sommerville, said this project offers enormous hope to those osteosarcoma sufferers who do not respond to traditional drug therapy and have no other curative options available to them. The project may lead to the first new treatment for osteosarcoma since the development of adjuvant chemotherapy, which is a tremendous step forward.

The current project will determine whether the protein product of a gene they have previously identified is involved in regulating cancer spread is also responsible for metastasis of this cancer. If this proves positive it will represent a viable therapeutic target to treat osteosarcoma patients before cancer spreads to other parts of the body.



Institute launches Community Service Announcement

The Wesley Research Institute's new Community Service Announcement (CSA), proudly supported by 7 News, was launched at a special function held at the Institute on 13 September 2007.

Titled 'Time', the CSA is designed to help communicate the Institute's unique mission of making a difference today to people's lives through medical research.

Professor Julie Campbell AO, Director of The Wesley Research Institute, said the CSA would be an excellent awareness tool to help promote the Institute's research and raise valuable funds.

"The release of this CSA is very timely to help us on this important journey. We are grateful to all the talented companies and individuals who helped create the advertisement and for their expertise and community mindedness."

The CSA was created by Mitchell and Partners, Cummins and Partners, and Brendan Williams Films who all generously donated their time and skills.

The CSA features a voiceover from the Institute's Ambassador, Rod Young from 7 News, and is being screened on Channel 7. You can also view the CSA on the homepage of the Institute's website at www.wesleyresearch.org.au.

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First Institute Ambassador appointed

Image courtesy Simon Davin



Mr Rod Young and Professor Julie Campbell AO

7 News presenter Rod Young, one of Queensland television's best known news presenters, was officially appointed the first Ambassador of The Wesley Research Institute at a special function on Thursday 13 September 2007.

The position recognises the outstanding work that Rod has done, and continues to undertake, on behalf of the Institute. On accepting the award, Rod said that he was very proud to receive the position of Ambassador and pledged to continue to do all he could to raise awareness of the Institute to help continue its important medical research.

"I have been hugely impressed with the increasing benefits that The Wesley Research Institute's research is bringing to ordinary people, easing pain and suffering, getting people back to their families and communities as soon as possible, improving quality of life and helping them to live normally again," Rod said.

New project aims to reduce rate of bone infections

Research to reduce the rate of infections resulting from orthopaedic implants is the focus of a new research project funded by The Wesley Research Institute.

Image courtesy Rhett Wymann



Bacterial bone infections are currently the most common complication in the treatment of bone fractures. These infections result in serious consequences for the patient and cause very high healthcare and socioeconomic costs to the community.

The main goal of the project is to determine whether specific antibiotics incorporated into a thin coating and applied to the surface of orthopaedic and trauma implants can effectively prevent bone infections. The thin coating is biodegradable and has been developed for the controlled release of antibiotics thereby preventing or treating any infection in the region around the implant.

Chief investigator of the project, Professor Michael Schuetz, said that the study had the potential to dramatically reduce the rate of bacterial bone infections and increase the quality of life for patients.

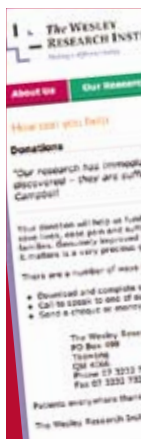
"The frequency of infections in complex open fractures is as high as 33 per cent," Professor Schuetz said.

"If this project is successful it will help reduce complications and therefore the demand on the healthcare system. This is a very positive outcome for patients, hospitals and the community."

Online giving made easier

Donating via the Institute's website has become much easier with the recent introduction of online giving. Online giving has grown rapidly worldwide in the last few years, mainly due to its convenience and improved safety. Amongst some age groups, online giving has overtaken other, more traditional methods of donating as the preferred method of supporting a charity. The Institute has responded to this trend by introducing an online giving facility on its website www.wesleyresearch.org.au.

Supporters need to simply click on the 'Ways you can help' button on the homepage and then click the link through to our online form. The donation process is safe, simple and instantaneous, allowing our donors yet another way to support the work we do to help the lives of patients everywhere.





(L-R): Leona Romaniuk, Julia Dyer, Simon Dyer (Managing Director, Sealy of Australia), Krystian Wakiec (Fundraising Manager - WRI), Esther Dyer, Carmel Dyer

Sealy springs into action

The Institute would like to announce the first corporate sponsor of its newly opened Tissue Bank - Sealy of Australia.

Sealy of Australia will sponsor the new position of Tissue Bank Technical Assistant, a key role in the collection of cancer and other tissue for medical researchers in Queensland and throughout Australia.

Manager of the Tissue Bank, Wendy-Jane Murray, said that the new position will give the Tissue Bank's resources a great boost.

"Collecting tissue samples is a very resource intensive exercise. The funding received from Sealy of Australia will enable us to expand the collection and processing of tissue for research that may ultimately lead to the cure for cancer," she said.

Announcing its involvement, the new sponsor said it was delighted to support the Institute in its unique initiative of developing a Tissue Bank for the collection and storage of cancer tissue samples.

"We feel this represents a major contribution towards analysis and research of particular types of cancer tissue for which sufficient sample numbers are not usually available," Sealy of Australia said.

Announcing the Asbestos Research Group

Australia has the highest incidence of mesothelioma disease in the world. In response to this, a number of concerned clinicians has joined with the Institute to form the Asbestos Research Group.

The Group will promote research, and raise awareness of asbestosis and asbestosis-related diseases both to the medical fraternity and the general community, with the aim to improve treatment and enhance the quality of life of those affected.

The Group will first analyse the progression of the disease over time as the basis for further research into reduced lung function and associated pain. It will also analyse the physical, emotional and financial effects of the disease on patients.

The Institute would like to thank Dr Roger Allen, Dr Maurice Heiner, Dr John Feenstra, and Slater and Gordon Lawyers for their support of this new initiative.



Image courtesy: Clarissa Chelheiro

Clinical Trials Update



Ms Amanda Stanton, Clinical Research Coordinator

We're looking for a way to help prevent Cervical Cancer. . . . can you help?

The Wesley Research Institute is currently involved in a trial to develop a new vaccine to help prevent infection with certain types of Human Papillomavirus (HPV). HPV is a common infection that is often undiagnosed. By helping prevent infection with HPV, the risk of developing cervical cancer may be reduced.

If you are a healthy young female aged between 18 to 26 years and interested in taking part in this trial or finding out more information, please call The Wesley Research Institute Clinical Trials Centre on 07 3232 7920 or register via our website at www.wesleyresearch.org.au and click 'take part in a clinical trial'.

Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer in women worldwide with more than 470,000 new cases diagnosed each year.

Reduced complications from diabetes

Results from a recently completed clinical trial at the Institute have shown that a new study drug significantly improved blood glucose readings and HbA1c levels (a blood test which reveals average blood glucose over a period of two to three months) in patients with type 2 diabetes. Improving blood glucose readings in turn reduces complications from diabetes.

This result is very significant as complications resulting from diabetes can lead to long-term damage of various organs including the eyes, kidneys and nerves. The success of this trial will now allow further trials to be conducted using this study drug, which may in turn lead to a new safe and effective drug available on the market to treat diabetes and prevent associated complications.



Image courtesy New Idea

Hannah's Chance Foundation

Hannah's Chance Foundation aims to raise valuable funds for medical research into rare types of cancer, called sarcomas. There are various types of sarcomas, all of which are very aggressive and almost 50 per cent of sufferers do not survive.

The establishment of Hannah's Chance Foundation was the dream of Hannah Ciobo, daughter of Australian swimming great Tracey Wickham and Robert Ciobo, and Hannah's husband Tom O'Driscoll. Hannah fought very bravely against the rare synovial sarcoma for three years until she lost her battle on 2 October 2007, aged 19. Tom suffered from Ewing's sarcoma, but fortunately is now in remission.

Hannah and Tom felt it was extremely important to raise both awareness of sarcomas and the funds needed to further research into this under-resourced area.

Due to the limited amount of research currently being undertaken on sarcomas there is every possibility that, with the community's support, Hannah's Chance Foundation can make a significant difference to the lives of thousands of sarcoma sufferers in Australia and around the world.

In Hannah's own words....."Being in hospital during my treatment I found it amazing how many children and some adults that have very similar things to me..... the worst thing is seeing a child in hospital receiving chemo and not knowing if the medicine they are getting is going to work.

Please help make a difference to these very special people's lives, give them a chance, and help give them their lives back."

Donations to Hannah's Chance Foundation can be made by visiting www.wesleyresearch.org.au and following the links to the Foundation's homepage.

Thank you for supporting medical research

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

Major research areas:

- Cancer
- Cardiovascular disease
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Diagnostic imaging
- Bone and wound healing
- Gynaecology
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