



Committee Reports

Allied Health Research Committee

The allied health research group includes health professionals providing diagnostic, rehabilitative and clinical support to the hospital and community through specialised services. It generates research within medical and social disability models.

In 2007 the Allied Health Research Committee continued to facilitate and support high-quality research into allied health. This nationally and internationally recognised research has contributed significantly to evidence-based practice in the hospital.

Co-ordinating and advocating for the dedicated allocation of resources to research in allied health has been a priority, with the committee striving to ensure allied health research needs were represented in strategic planning. The group provided the support needed to increase the number of research proposals, publications, presentations and successful grant applications in allied health.

An important part of the committee's role has been to increase the profile of allied health involvement in research at the hospital and in the community. It has also encouraged networking and collaborations with nursing and medical researchers.

One of the committee's key achievements in 2007 has been the development of an Allied Health Research Collaborative (AHRC). As a group, the AHRC has secured more than \$3 million of funding, which was awarded in the areas of falls prevention, exercise therapy,

clinical education, brain injury rehabilitation, oncology and nutrition. It oversaw a significant increase in postgraduate research participants, with more than 16 full-time and part-time higher degree students enrolled in 2007.

The AHRC was published in more than 16 refereed journals and book chapters. Members presented research at more than 20 national and international conferences.

The AHRC was proud to increase its collaborative/multidisciplinary research projects. It also received Cancer Collaborative Group PhD and PA Foundation Allied Health Research Scholarship awards.

Details of funding attained, postgraduate students, publications and presentations can be found in the relevant departmental reports.

The Princess Alexandra Hospital celebrated significant special events in 2007. It recognised five years of partnership with The University of Queensland with the appointment of allied health conjoint research fellows. The hospital hosted the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences University of Queensland Postgraduate Research Conference, with more than 30 speakers and 120 attendees. The allied health session during PAH Week, which addressed the promising future of allied health, was exceptionally well attended.





Cancer Collaborative Group

As a result of the efforts of the Princess Alexandra Hospital Cancer Collaborative Group, translational research achievements are enormously encouraging. Outstanding results have been achieved in the areas of leukaemia, head and neck cancer, osteosarcoma, genomics and stem cell biology. These achievements form the foundation for future research endeavours.

The Translational Research Unit has created an environment in which clinical trials and research projects can be initiated to specifically address improving patient outcomes. Over fifty cancer related projects were submitted to the Princess Alexandra Hospital Human Research Ethics Committee, of which forty were clinical trials. A number of projects continue to make advances in predicting clinical outcomes.

Acute Myeloid Leukaemia (AML) project: A range of findings indicate that histone deacetylase inhibitors may be useful in treating a subset of elderly patients with AML. The manuscript is in preparation for the Valproic Acid with Ara-C in elderly patients with AML.

B-CLL project: Long term in vitro cultures of CLL has been established and two novel growth factors for CLL cells have been identified. The manuscript has been submitted for publication. A more reliable prognostic test for ZAP-70 is in development. ZAP-70 is useful in identifying patients at risk of developing progressive disease.

Head and Neck project: This study has been completed and a manuscript submitted for publication. The experience of this study has led to further pre-clinical investigations as a prelude to a new clinical study.

Osteosarcoma project: To date research data suggests that osteosarcoma patients who will do poorly can be predicted with 93% accuracy.

HPV and Breast Cancer project: Observations for the presence of HPV in breast cancer tumour samples are showing that a significant fraction of the tumour samples are HPV. These are preliminary findings that may lead to altered patient management.

Training and Mentoring Young Investigators

The Cancer Collaborative Group has awarded six PhD scholarships and two practitioner fellowships since 2004. The PhD scholarships were awarded to: Letitia Burridge (Gender Differences in Lay Caregiver Needs, Burden and Support While Caring for a Patient with Recurrent Cancer); Fang Zhou (The Molecular Mechanisms of Tumour Immunotherapy); Sarina Cameron (Treatment failure in Head & Neck squamous cell carcinoma may be due to biologically

distinct tumour cell subtypes); David Brown-Rothwell (Prediction of Hearing Outcomes in Acoustic Neuromas Surgery: Correlation between Audiological Results, Magnetic Resonance Imaging, Surgical Findings, and Histopathological Appearance); Bena Riddle (Long-term Swallowing Outcomes in Head and Neck Cancer Patients Treated with Curative Intent Altered Fractionation Radiotherapy).

In addition, Jennifer Fleming, PhD research scholar, received support towards her project with the ALLG Tissue Bank looking at Perceptions of Tissue Banks and the Related Ethical and Legal Challenges of Consent, Linkage and Disclosure of Research Results.

The practitioner fellowships were awarded to Dr Alex Guminski, Medical Oncologist, who presented on Valproic Acid in Head and Neck Cancer at the: American Association for Cancer Research Annual Meeting Los Angeles, USA; Lorne Cancer Conference, Victoria; and the Annual Scientific Meeting of the

Australian and New Zealand Head and Neck Society in Brisbane. The other fellowship was awarded to Amanda Purcell, Occupational Therapist, researching cancer related fatigue. Stage 1 of her study focuses on contributing factors and effects in patients undergoing chemotherapy and radiation therapy treatment. Stage 2 is a randomised control trial investigating the effects of group education and support in reducing cancer-related fatigue and improving quality of life in patients undergoing radiotherapy.

Translating Research Outcomes

The group has published Cochrane reviews including 'Sequencing of chemotherapy and radiation therapy for early breast cancer' and 'Fraction size in radiation treatment for breast conservation in early breast cancer'.

Sequencing of chemotherapy and radiation therapy for early breast cancer has showed the frequency and severity of side effects of chemotherapy and radiotherapy. (<http://www.mrw.interscience.wiley.com/cochrane/clsysrev/articles/CD005212/frame.html>)

Fraction size in radiation treatment for breast conservation in early breast cancer highlights women with less significant tumours that have not infiltrated lymph nodes, may be able to have fewer radiation treatments after tumour removal. New techniques have been developed where a portion of the breast is irradiated.

Two reviews are currently in the process of being published.

New Initiatives and Other Achievements

New initiatives included the award of two grants by the Cancer Collaborative Management Committee towards multi-disciplinary clinical research involving surgeons at the hospital. The successful recipients were: Dr Andrew Barbour for a project investigating '*Whether Inhibition of the shh pathway represents a potential therapeutic target in gastric cancer*' and Associate Professor Ian Bennett et al for a study on '*HPV association with Breast Cancer*'.

A total of eighteen presentations were made at the bi-monthly seminars which included national and international speakers. The seminars continued to be strongly supported with good attendance.

In terms of publications as one measure of performance, forty-nine peer review articles were published by members of the Cancer Collaborative Group. An increase in the number of published abstracts and book chapters from the research activity was also evident. Members continued to attract competitive peer-review funds from a variety of sources including the Leukemia Foundation; the Wesley Research Institute, the Cancer Clinical Network Allied Health AHS Cancer Care Initiative Research Scheme and Queensland Health Southern Area Allied Health Cancer Care Initiative Research Scheme



Human Research Ethics Committee

With the launch in May of the revised National Health and Medical Research Council “*National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*”, 2007 was a full and productive year for the Human Research Ethics Committee. It continued to ensure the ethical conduct of research first and foremost safeguards the interests of our research participants and supports the efforts of the research community at and in collaboration with the Princess Alexandra Hospital.

During the year the Committee held eleven meetings and reviewed a total of 259 new protocol submissions. As represented in Figure 1, fifty percent of submissions

related to clinical research, with the majority of these involving phase II & III clinical trials. A significant number of other research protocols included a diverse range of collaborative projects (such as research in epidemiology, nursing, allied health, community health and indigenous communities) with researchers at numerous affiliated teaching hospitals, research institutes and academic institutions throughout Australia and internationally.

The overall number of new research protocol submissions continued to increase since 2001, showing some fluctuation between years.

**New Protocol Submissions
January - December 2007**

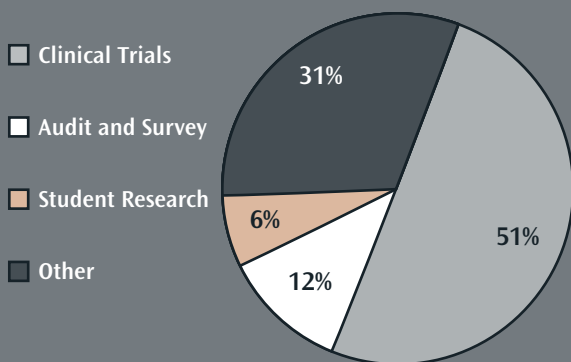


Figure 1: New Submissions by Category

**New Protocol Submissions
2001-2007**

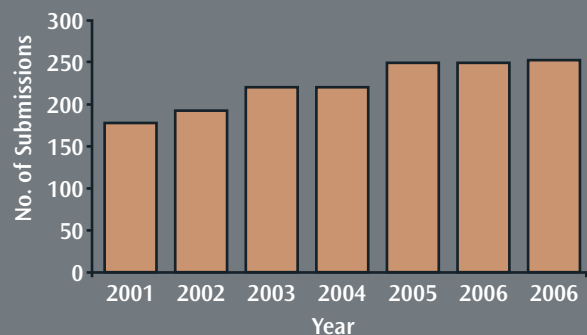


Figure 2: New Protocol Submissions 2001-2007

Significant events included the appointment of Mrs Sharon Knight as the Ethics Manager and a number of new appointments to the Committee. Dr Karam Kostner, Cardiologist; Dr Daniel Varghese, Psychiatrist; Ms Eleanor Milligan, Clinical Ethicist; and Ms Jennifer Fleming, Researcher accepted voluntary appointments to the Princess Alexandra Hospital HREC. These appointments allowed for a broader representation on the Committee to reflect the increasing diversity of research activities.

Special thanks goes to Dr Peter Pillans for continuing to provide independent Pharmacological/ Toxicological expert advice and support for Phase I and Phase II studies along with a number of expert reviewers who had agreed to act in this capacity, including Dr Peter Mollie, Dr Richard Ashby, Professor Ranjeny Thomas and Dr David Looke.

A number of staff and committee members attended and participated in professional conferences including the Intensive Research Ethics Course, conducted by the Centre for Ethics in Medicine and Society, Monash University, the National NHMRC Conference. Ms

Fleming presented at both the National NHMRC Conference and the Australian New Zealand Institute for Health Law and Ethics. The Chair and the Ethics Manager presentations at the 'Ethics Training Day' conducted at the PAH by Nursing Research.

Simultaneous audits of contracts and protocol files were carried out during the year. This has provided the opportunity to identify gaps and improve the review and approval processes. This led to a platform for process change which resulted in a significant reduction in time from submission to ethical clearance. Review and upgrade of the PAH Ethics website remains ongoing. Various forms were added to the website, including a new Summary Submission form, revised annual reports as well as onsite and external adverse events forms. Additional resources are planned to be posted on the website including internal and external links to information on ethics and researcher responsibilities and/or code of conduct. The PA HREC was involved in the pilot of the Mutual Acceptance Model for multi-centre research conducted by Queensland Health.



PA Foundation

The PA Foundation continued to expand during 2007, awarding record funding of more than \$1 million for medical research on the Princess Alexandra Hospital campus for the 2008 calendar year. The Foundation is confident that next year it will substantially exceed this amount.

The primary objective of the Foundation during the past year was to increase current and future ability to financially support and encourage medical research on the Princess Alexandra Hospital campus. To that end, new and productive strategies and actions continue to expand. These include the establishment of commercial ventures and an Endowment Fund, workplace giving programs, and greater emphasis on major gifts and bequests.

In addition to the continuing support and encouragement the PA Foundation receives from Professor David Theile, Clinical CEO of Princess Alexandra Hospital, and Professor John Prins, Chair, Princess Alexandra Hospital Centres for Health Research, particular mention must be made of the many years of productive and impacting service Emeritus Professor Ken Donald has made as a Director of the PA Foundation and Chairman of the PA Foundation Research Committee.

Professor Donald retired from the PA Foundation Board in November 2007; his dedication and enthusiasm will be greatly missed.

Mr Michael T Willie OAM

Chairman

