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Metro South Health Research Report 2015
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T1 – T4 Translation definitions

- T1: Innovation driven by clinical questions
- T2: Clinical Study
- T3: Clinical Trial
- T4: Clinical Practice
- T5: International adoption and assessment

https://www.tri.edu.au/translational-pathway

Centres for Health Research

The Centres for Health Research is the coordinating body for research at the Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH). It also serves the rest of Metro South Health through the Metro South Health Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

We foster all forms of research across the PAH campus—from basic biomedical to translational, clinical, health service and population health research.

www.metrosouth.health.qld.gov.au

Acknowledgement of the traditional owners

Metro South Health acknowledges and pays respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, people, consumers and staff, past and present, on whose land we provide health services to all Queenslanders. We sincerely thank them for their ongoing generosity and willingness to work with and support our staff.
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Welcome to the 2015 Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH) Centres for Health Research (CHR) Annual Research Report, highlighting our achievements and progress in the quest to translate advances in research into tangible patient benefits, both locally and around the world.

This was evidenced by yet another successful year of PAH-based researchers securing National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and other competitive grants, helping to drive innovation across a broad range of research areas.

This innovation was on display for all to see as the Digital Hospital project went live in November, making PAH the first large-scale hospital in Australia to implement an electronic medical record.

Among the many benefits of the project is the rich depth of data for future research into improving diagnosis and treatment, as well as boosting clinical efficiency. It is a stunning achievement.

This year, transformational research was the focus of Queensland’s longest running health-related conference, the PAH Health Symposium, with the theme of Transforming Discoveries to Better Health.

The event was officially opened by the Minister for Health, The Honourable Cameron Dick. Professor Carolyn Mountford, the new CEO and Director of Research at the Translational Research Institute (TRI), was the Symposium’s International Fellow and Kurt Aaron Orator.

For 56 years, the Symposium has provided an opportunity for PAH researchers and colleagues to showcase the best clinical, research and educational work conducted, not just across the campus, but from national and global visitors as well.

The CHR encompasses more than 50 groups, engaged in cutting-edge research across the campus and helping shape the future of healthcare globally.

Under the stewardship of Metro South Health and its Board Chair, Mr Terry White AO, PAH has long been recognised as a leader in translational research, with a strong culture of collaboration between clinicians, scientists, university partners and industry.

That collaborative approach to healthcare informs the ongoing ties with the TRI and Brisbane Diamantina Health Partners, both located on the PAH campus.

These partnerships and more are vital in developing CHR into a global exemplar of medical innovation and collaboration, both now and in the future.

Dr Stephen Ayre
Executive Director
PAH-QEII Health Network
PAH Centres for Health Research (CHR) continued to build on the achievements of previous years, strengthening ongoing partnerships and expanding the portfolio and funding of research projects.

Brisbane Diamantina Health Partners (BDHP)
Metro South Health (MSH) is a founding partner of Brisbane Diamantina Health Partners (BDHP), who are committed to a partnership between major hospitals in Metro North Hospital and Health Service and MSH, the Translational Research Institute (TRI), QIMR Berghofer, University of Queensland and Queensland University of Technology, with a mission to improve healthcare by embedding research and teaching into clinical services. BDHP was assessed by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) as having the potential to achieve status of an Advanced Health Research and Translation Centre (AHRTC). Such centres are benchmarked as the most prominent nationally of international standard, delivering the best care by developing and translating the latest research findings into patient care.

MAJOR RESEARCH AWARD
Former Australian of the Year Professor Ian Frazer and his late colleague Jian Zhou won a prestigious international award for developing the world’s first vaccine against cervical cancer, Gardasil. The immunologists received the European Inventor Award in the popular prize category. The award, presented annually by the European Patent Office, is considered the Oscar of the research world. 

ACKNOWLEDGING ACHIEVEMENTS
I’d also like to congratulate researchers across the PAH and MSH research community in 2015 for their outstanding achievements, including:

NHMRC grant recipients:
• Dr David Vesey: NHMRC Project Grant ‘Modulating Inflammatory and Fibrogenic Pathways in Kidney Disease using a novel antagonist of Protease-Activated-Receptor-2’.
• Dr Li Lin, NHMRC Peter Doherty Biomedical Early Career Fellowship (2016-2019), ‘Novel Microdevices for Controlled Blood and Skin Extraction’.
• Dr Mitchell Stark, NHMRC Peter Doherty Biomedical Early Career Fellowship (2016-2019), ‘Identification of the molecular hallmarks of naevi progressing to melanoma’.
• Prof Monika Janda and Prof H. Peter Soyer: NHMRC Partnership Grant – ‘Redesigning skin cancer early detection and care’.

On behalf of the CHR, I am delighted to present this eighteenth Annual Research Report. The CHR continues to go from strength to strength and we look forward to taking that journey in partnership with our academic, research and healthcare partners.

Professor Ken Ho
Chair
Centres for Health Research
SECTION 1

Key Achievements
ScreenIT—an online screening, person-centred care tool
Clinician-researchers at the Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH) have developed a web-based, consumer-driven, screening tool called ScreenIT that quickly assesses patient and family need for health services.

A study conducted at PAH showed the ScreenIT app resulted in a 25 per cent reduction in unnecessary clinical appointments for patients undergoing head and neck cancer treatment, and a saving of $193,230 for the service.

The study tested the effectiveness of the app to assess swallowing, nutrition and distress in head and neck cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy.

PAH Director of Radiation Oncology Research Associate Professor Sandro Porceddu said computerised screening was found to be consistently more sensitive to patient-reported concerns and distress, and could revolutionise the way patient needs were managed.

“The study found patients were more honest using ScreenIT compared to taking with clinicians. They’d identify a greater number of symptoms and rate them as more severe using the app,” Prof Porceddu said.

By using ScreenIT, patients were able to enter information from a comfortable, ‘safe’ space with the support of family. The information entered by patients and their families was then accessed by health professionals via the web.

Project lead and speech pathologist Dr Bena Cartmill said the web-based platform efficiently connected patients and their family to the PAH allied health team for additional care during their cancer treatment—providing an efficient and effective alternative to additional clinical appointments.

“ScreenIT yields all data in five minutes which is timely and efficient for follow-up by our clinicians and also reduces unnecessary appointments, allowing patients to spend more time with family or at work rather than in hospital,” Dr Cartmill said.
A new Centre of Research Excellence (CRE) for the Study of Naevi will launch next year. The innovative research project aims to increase understanding of naevi (moles) and melanoma, with the hope of discovering why some moles turn deadly while others do not.

Project lead Professor H. Peter Soyer, UQ Chair in Dermatology and Director of the Princess Alexandra Hospital Dermatology Department, said improved understanding of benign mole development, transformation, and recognition of changes was the key to understanding melanoma.

“Previous work, aimed to reduce the burden of melanoma, has focussed on the study of malignant tumours,” he said.

“This project will be internationally unique through its focus on the production and formation of moles, and by studying moles from epidemiological, clinical, dermoscopic, pathologic, molecular genetic and personal behavioural viewpoints.

“This will also help with establishing more efficient prevention and early detection models.”

The CRE would conduct one core study (with recruitment via the electoral role) and three interlinked programs, which would engage all CRE scientists and act as a unique training resource for the CRE fellows and students.

Prof Soyer said consumers would also play an important role to ensure the relevance of the research to the community and its translation into beneficial outcomes for people with melanoma.

“Consumer engagement is critical and will be integral for patient-centred care and for melanoma control,” Prof Soyer said.

The project is funded by the Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) until the end of 2020. The research partners involved in the new Centre of Research Excellence are: the University of Queensland (UQ), QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute, Cancer Council Queensland (CCQ), The University of Sydney and Queensland University of Technology (QUT).
SECTION 2
Research Performance 2015
The 2015 year realised a range of positive indicators of research performance across MSH including:

- An increase in authorised research projects to 345, from 200 the previous year.

- A rise in research publications attributed to PAH to 504, from a previous total of 374 for 2014—this represents a 35 per cent increase in publications in one year.

- Research expenditure (excluding in-kind support) of $18.4 million, comprised of $15.6 million in current expenditure and $2.8 million in capital expenditure.

### Number of research studies authorised

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Authorised</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>118</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>365</td>
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### Research publications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Publications</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>504</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research expenditure 2015

Private non-profit organisation
$1,645,221

Australian Government
$280,047

Department
$48,951

Overseas locations
$86,221

Government bodies and statutory authorities
$17,545

Other State/Local government
$2,724

Capital (Government bodies and statutory authorities)
$2,822,522

Government bodies and statutory authorities
$7,185,653

Universities
$1,288,246

Business
$4,996,228
SECTION 3
Committee Reports
The PAH Research Council was established in 2015 as the peak body that provides strategic advice and makes recommendations to the Executive Director in placing research as an integral part of healthcare planning and delivery. The Research Committee continues to function operationally to oversee the administration of peer review grant support. The Council ensures that congruence is achieved between clinical, corporate and research governance to achieve the Strategic Vision that: The integration of research into delivery of clinical services is a key driver of the PAH’s leadership in health care.

The core objectives of the Research Council are to identify and prioritise strategic research goals and develop policies that bring excellence in healthcare for the organisation.

The scope includes:

- Funding and business administration of research.
- Assessment and determining research priorities.
- Requirements that strengthen research capacity, standards and productivity.
- Embedding of research as core business in clinical service departments.
- Commercialising of research discoveries.
- Strengthening collaboration and partnerships with the PAHs affiliated universities.
- Overseeing the terms of reference and appointments of the Research Committee.

Membership:

Membership is drawn from the PAH clinical divisions, MSH, the Translational Research Institute, PA Research Foundation, affiliated universities and appropriate external advisor(s):

- Professor Ken Ho, Chair
- Dr Stephen Ayre, Executive Director
- Alister Whitta, Chief Finance Officer
- Dr Judy Flores, Division of Medicine
- Prof Stephen Lynch, Division of Surgery
- Associate Professor Euan Walpole, Division of Cancer
- Kathy Grudzinskas, Division of Allied Health
- Veronica Casey, Division of Nursing
- Dr Richard Ashby, Metro South
- Professor Carolyn Mountford, TRI
- Damian Topp, PA Research Foundation
The PAH Research Committee promotes a strong culture of research excellence and fosters collaboration among the PAH clinical research community, to improve human health. Major goals of the Committee are to enhance research productivity, capability and excellence by supporting research career development and projects by administering a rigorous peer review system of award. The Committee is represented by clinical and non-clinical divisions of the PAH (medical, nursing and allied health), the Metro South Human Research Ethics Committee, UQ School of Medicine, the University of Queensland Diamantina Institute, and Queensland University of Technology (QUT).

The Committee also built on its previous work, in support of research and the dissemination of research findings. The Committee advocated for and secured funding from the Private Practice Trust Fund to enable the Biostatistical Support Service to be extended from 1.5 to 2.5 per week. The Committee also continued its support of the annual PAH Health Symposium, which provides a showcase for research on the PAH Campus.

The work of the Research Committee receives strong support from the PAH executive, which values the strategic advice it receives to sustain the varied research conducted on the PAH campus while encouraging the scope of research to broaden and evolve.

**List of Research Committee Members 2015:**

- Professor Ken Ho (Chair)
- Dr Nigel Brown
- Associate Professor Richard Roylance
- Professor Len Gray
- Associate Professor Carmel Hawley
- Dr Ingrid Hickman
- Professor Gerald Holtmann
- Professor Amanda Henderson
- Professor Michael Schuetz
- Professor H. Peter Soyer
- Professor Michael Stowasser
- Dr Ian Vela
- Associate Professor Euan Walpole
- Professor Elizabeth Ward
- Dr Bruce Wyse
Human Research Ethics Committee Report 2015

The Metro South Human Research Ethics Committee (MS HREC), established and administered within the Centres for Health Research (CHR), reviews the ethical and scientific validity of proposed research protocols for compliance with endorsed national standards and guidelines across Metro South Health. The MS HREC continues to participate in the National Approach for the single ethical review of multicentre studies with Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia, Northern Territory and Victoria.

In 2015, the Committee saw an increase of 13 per cent in applications from the previous year, with 396 applications received. Increased volume of applications was consistent across the three levels of ethical review, namely exemption, low-risk and standard-risk application.

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) coordinated the implementation of the National Mutual Acceptance (NMA)—a scheme which initially allowed for single ethical review of multi-centre clinical trials—and in 2015 expanded beyond clinical trials to all human research. This change has directly led to a positive reduction in the number of ethical reviews conducted by participating Human Research Ethics Committees. Where previously a study could receive any number of reviews from different HRECs, now one HREC review will suffice.

In July 2015 the Metro South HREC Chair hosted an inaugural Chair/HREC Coordinators meeting at the Translational Research Institute. This event was well received, with representation from a number of Queensland Health HRECs including Mater Health Services and Lady Cilento Children’s Hospital.

In September 2015 the Metro South HREC Coordinator, Mrs Rebecca Lacey, was appointed as the only external representative on The University of Queensland’s Enhancing Systems at UQ Working Group. The Working Group’s purpose was to develop a new human research ethics framework in which to embed the University’s existing research platform.
List of HREC Membership

- A/Prof Richard Roylance, HREC Chair
- A/Prof Scott Campbell, Chair of Low Risk Review Panel, HREC Deputy Chair
- Dr Liz McCaffrey, HREC Deputy Chair

Lay Members:
- Mr John Buswell
- Dr Paul Spurling
- Mrs Beverley Kurkowski

Professional Care Members:
- Ms Sarah Stirling
- Ms C J Cabilan
- Ms Lisette Knight
- Dr Mary Boyde
- Dr Jenny Jones
- Mr Kelly Perkins
- Dr Adam La Caze

Pastoral Care Members:
- Mr Bruce Monley
- Dr Trevor Jordan
- Aunty Betty McGrady
- Ms Florence Spurling

Lawyer Members:
- Ms Susan Gardiner
- Mr John Bennett

Researcher Members:
- Professor Rick Jackson
- A/Prof Amanda Wheeler
- Dr Peter Mollee
- A/Prof Gail Robinson
- Dr Nikola Stepanov

Metro South HREC will miss the following members who retired in 2015:
- Dr Wendy Foley (member since 2012): valued member with expert knowledge of ATSI research.
- Dr Lyndall Spencer (member since 2011): valued member with wealth of clinical knowledge.

The institution sincerely appreciates all former members for their contributions, warmly welcomes the new members, and thanks all current members for their hard work and dedication, without which research could not be conducted within Metro South Health.
Our Mission:  
*To bring research to life*

Our Vision:  
*To prevent and cure disease*

The PA Research Foundation funds life-saving research is aimed at developing better diagnoses, treatments and preventions for some of Australia’s biggest health challenges. The Foundation is fortunate to receive donations from the general public, the business community, bequests, Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH) staff and from the thousands of patients and their families who have benefited from the medical treatment provided by PAH.

The Foundation supports PAH-based researchers from Queensland Health, The University of Queensland, Queensland University of Technology, Griffith University and the Mater Medical Research Institute. Our researchers are at the forefront of discoveries across all health and medical research disciplines including medical, nursing, allied health and basic research.

The Foundation is a statutory authority established in 1984 to raise funds for health and medical research at PAH, and is managed by the CEO and an independent Board of Directors composed of local business leaders and the medical community.

The Foundation aims to support the significant health and medical research advances being made at the PAH. Since the opening of the Translational Research Institute (TRI) on the PAH campus, research performed by PAH-based scientists and clinical researchers has been moved to the forefront of health research in Queensland and the world. The Foundation is excited to continue promoting the PAH campus as a premier site for clinical research and an internationally acclaimed academic health research centre enhancing interdisciplinary collaborations between clinical researchers and basic scientists.

A record $1.3 million was contributed by the Foundation to research projects on the campus—$750,000 to Research Grants and $600,000 to direct projects and education. Past researchers funded by the Foundation have progressed to see their projects approved for ongoing National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and the Australian Research Council (ARC) research grant support, confirming our position as a vital support mechanism for promising early stage medical research.

I would like to thank all those who generously donated to the PA Research Foundation and in doing so invested in the future health and wellbeing of our families and communities.

**Mr Robert Bowen**  
Chairman  
PA Research Foundation