

NCS STAFF VISIT PNG

For many years now, a medical student exchange program, supported by the RSL, has operated between the Northern Clinical School and the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG). Each summer, two PNG students come to RNSH for a 4 week elective and two NCS students spend 4 weeks in PNG. Last June, Trudy Neven and I spent 10 days in PNG, visiting Port Moresby, Goroka and Wewak, to strengthen ties with the medical school and also to establish new links. While our students spend a week at Port Moresby General Hospital, they have had to make their own arrangements to experience other parts of the country.



We started at Port Moresby General Hospital, PNG's only tertiary referral hospital and home to the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, UPNG. After 4 days we flew to Goroka, capital of Eastern Highlands Province, where we arranged 2 week placements for our students at Goroka Base Hospital.

Next, we flew to Wewak, capital of East Sepik Province. The head surgeon at Wewak General Hospital, Dr Sister Joseph, is building a clinic boat to serve communities along the Sepik River. Future students will spend a week based at the Hospital, and may be able to join the clinic boat. Despite the local need for health care, Wewak General Hospital is under constant threat of closure due to lack of funds, and it is never known from one month to the next whether it will be able to continue operating.

If you would like to help support these valuable exchanges, donations of medical supplies can be made to the Clinical School for students to take with them in November. For more information, please contact me at jgoyen@med.usyd.edu.au or on (02) 9926 7241.

Judy Goyen, Electives Coordinator

L: NICU, Goroka Base General Hospital

THE NORTHERN CLINICAL SCHOOL WELCOMES

Gina Dolphin

Gina works part-time at NCS, assisting with many aspects of the School's activities. In the past, she has worked as a hospital ward clerk in Sydney, Melbourne and London, and in administration at Macquarie University and in the finance industry. She has also worked for the Historic Houses Trust of NSW at the Justice and Police Museum, and in the Collections Management Unit.

Gina has completed a BA in Australian History and Aboriginal Studies, followed by a postgraduate degree in Museum Studies. She now works as a history researcher on her non-NCS days. Gina's other interests include singing in the Macquarie University Singers, Australian history, bush walking and theatre.



Stephanie Tozer

Stephanie, the Clinical Skills Co-ordinator, is responsible for organising Clinical Skills sessions for the medical students. She has an undergraduate degree in Applied Science (Nurs) and has nursed in a range of hospitals including RNSH, St Vincents Sydney, Cairns Base, and the Royal Sussex County in the UK. Stephanie has a Postgraduate Diploma in Rehabilitation Counselling, and most recently worked as a Rehabilitation Counsellor for injured workers in the NSW Workers Compensation and CTP insurance schemes. Stephanie will be going on maternity leave from the end of March '05, but we'll see her again soon!

The Clinical School also welcomes **Amy Cumarasingam**, part-time assistant in our Finance Office, and **Zoë Erbacher**, part-time assistant in the Clinical Skills Centre.



To add your name to the mailing list, or for change of address, please contact Executive Officer, tel: (02) 9926 6190, fax: 9926 6188



University of Sydney Faculty of Medicine

NORTHERN CLINICAL SCHOOL

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER/JANUARY 2005

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NCS POSTGRAD RESEARCH STUDENTS "GETAWAY" WITH IT...



On the way in the water-taxi

The first Postgraduate Research Student Society (PreSS) Getaway was held on 1st December '04. On a warm sunny day, 25 Northern postgrad research students gathered in the cool shade of massive gum trees on Rodd Island, a small heritage-listed island in Sydney Harbour. Our guides that day were Dr. Paul Heinrich (a tall and charismatic bespectacled guru with a doctorate in Drama) and Professor Stewart Dunn (shorter in height but as large in heart and mind). Both hail from the Department of Psychological Medicine and the Pam McLean Cancer Communications Centre and have over twenty years teaching experience, particularly in fostering communication skills in students and professionals dealing with cancer patients.

We whizzed from Circular Quay to the island in water taxis and were soon clustered in small groups divulging two facts about ourselves: one a complete lie and the other an unbelievable truth. It was up to our group to guess which was which. We'd soon lost any insecurity after learning the horrible truths about

our peers and the senior staff present, including Professors Michael Field (Associate Dean, Northern Clinical School), Judy Black (Chair of the Research Committee, NHMRC) and Mac Christie (Head of Basic Research, Pain Management Research Institute).

The morning was spent under the trees in one of four groups, Activists, Reflectors, Theorists and Pragmatists, according to our inclination to a particular style of thinking. Through discussion and animated debates lead by Paul and Stewart, we discovered how we each think differently in response to situations. We each have differing elements of the four ways of approaching a problem. We discussed how this translates into research practices, our perspectives, and our reactions to everyday issues.

After an enjoyable catered lunch, afternoon exercises focused on de-stress and breathing techniques, and exercises to enter two important frames of mind: calamity and confidence. We



Research students gather on Rodd Island

each talked about our work on an individual and group level, and it was incredible to learn how easily confidence can be set free in each of us. Throughout the day, the atmosphere was unconditionally accepting, and Paul and Stewart were inundated with thank you's at the end.

The first NCS Postgraduate Student Getaway was conceived by former PreSS President Dean Kilby and organised by the Society. Important contributors were Jennica Winhammar (Neurology), Michelle O'Han (Kolling Institute), Scott Stanners (Renal Medicine), Natasha Kumar (Neurosurgery) and Vashe Chandrakanthan (Human Reproduction). Thanks to Paul Heinrich and Stewart Dunn plus Judy Black and Mac Christie for making the day worthwhile. Thanks also to Michael Field of the Northern Clinical School, and to the University of Sydney Union, for guidance and sponsorship.

James Padley and Scott Stanners, PreSS



Lto R Scott Stanners, Jennica Winhammar, Mac Christie, Michael Field, Judy Black, Stewart Dunn, Paul Hendrich (back), Michelle O'Han, Natasha Kumar.

POSTCARD FROM LISMORE



Dr Geoff Trueman & Olivia Chan

Situated between rainforests and sea on the far north coast of NSW, Lismore Base Hospital (LBH) has this year become a new and attractive three week rural option for fourth year students in the Perinatal & Womens Health Rotation. LBH is the major acute referral facility for the Northern Rivers Health Service, and serves a population of about 150,000 people.

The Obstetrics & Gynaecology medical team consists of four consultants, two registrars, and two RMO's. Under the supervision of Dr Geoff Trueman, there is opportunity for lots of hands-on experience, including public antenatal clinics, private clinics, theatres, ward rounds and baby checks. Dermatology tutorials and clinics are also available under the supervision of Dr Ken Gudmundssen. It is a great chance to do O&G training in a supportive environment, while gaining awareness of some of the differences between rural and metropolitan settings.

Olivia Chan, Year 4, 2004

RURAL DOCTOR RECRUITMENT!

From Natalie Chilvers, medical student on rural placement:

"My exciting news is that I just got engaged to my boyfriend a week ago. I met him when I was doing my Med 3 rotations in Orange, he lives here on a vineyard. I think the Clinical School has cemented a future rural doctor!"

IN THE OUTBACK

"I started my 4 week placement at a District Hospital in the Northern Territory on Tuesday, where I discovered Territory Time. Medically, it became busy a few days later: Thursday is pension day, and Thursday night is the big night in ED, closely followed by Friday, when people drink and spend the remains from the night before. In the city we've been taught to measure patient's alcohol consumption in standard drinks. Up here the SI unit is slabs per day, and one slab a day is standard. Our first patient had a 144 pack-year smoking history - a record in my short medical career. I spent my first evening there sitting on the balcony with a friend and colleague, watching the kangaroos on the lawn at dusk, and hearing the cries of two Aboriginal patients. She had been assaulted and he had been in a motor bike accident. Both had severe head injuries and will probably never recover. Later in the week we met one of the doctors, a quietly spoken man whose wife works for the Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS) in town. Watching a doctor interact with patients can be very revealing. I soon realised how difficult it is to take a history and examine a patient so acutely unwell as some of these people were. This week we'll fly with some doctors out to 2 remote communities to help run clinics for the day. Here in the Territory we are getting lots of long case practice, and seeing a very different side of life."

Jennifer Reilly, Year 3, 2004



Jennifer and staff member outside the NT clinic



Plane used for rural flights in the NT

RESEARCH GRANT NEWS

NHMRC FUNDING FOR 2005

Congratulations to the following NCS researchers who were awarded NHMRC grants for 2005.

- A/Prof Ian Cameron: A randomised controlled falls prevention trial of long distance glasses in elderly multifocal wearers (3yrs support - \$487,000)
- Prof Sharon McKinley: Testing a home based rehabilitation program for survivors of a critical illness (3yrs support - \$338,875)
- Dr Simon Finfer: The RENAL (Randomised Evaluation of Normal vs Augmented Level) replacement therapy in ICU study (4yrs support - \$1,868,475)
- Dr James Melrose, Dr Christopher Little, Prof David Sonnabend: The biology of small proteoglycans in musculoskeletal disorders (3yrs support - \$508,750)
- A/Prof Ian Cameron, Dr Susan Kurlle, Prof Philip Sambrook, A/Prof Lynette March: Improving adherence with the use of hip protectors (2yrs support - \$399,750)
- Prof Jonathan Morris: A randomised controlled trial of immediate delivery versus expectant care in women with ruptured membranes close to term (3yrs support - \$756,300)
- Prof Eileen Gallery, Dr Christopher Jackson, Prof Jonathan Morris: Trophoblast invasion and preeclampsia (3yrs support - \$497,750)
- A/Prof Christopher O'Neill: Actions of tumour regulating molecules in the early embryo (3yrs support - \$402,000)
- Professor Mac Christie: Improving our understanding of chronic pain using conopeptides (5yrs support - \$7.16M).

SPINAL CORD INJURY RESEARCH GRANTS

Congratulations also to research teams headed by Dr Janet Keast and Dr James Middleton for funding received from the NSW Spinal Cord Injury and Other Neurological Conditions Research Grants Program.

- Dr Janet Keast: Pain following spinal cord injury: Understanding mechanisms to develop treatments (4yrs support - \$2M)
- Dr James Middleton: Enhancing recovery and independence after spinal cord injury (\$1M).

RESEARCH STUDENT NEWS

PROSPECTS FOR PhDs - THE BENCH AND BEYOND

In this special symposium, organized by Kolling PhD students Scott Stanners and Dean Kilby, more than 100 Northern PhD students were able to see some of the opportunities available to them in academia (lecturing, post-docs etc.), industry (Big Pharma, Biotech, Finance etc.), science communication, science in government, crime fighting and recruitment. A DVD of the day is available from Scott via his email: stanners@med.usyd.edu.au.

NEW PReSS WEBSITE

Visit the PReSS website at <http://www.ncs.usyd.edu.au/press/>. Developed by Chris Scarlett (member of PReSS Executive and website developer), it contains information on academic and social events, student seminars, scholarships and important links. Photos in the next Newsletter!

A REFURBISHED POSTGRAD STUDENT COMMON ROOM IS ON THE WAY!

Friday 11th March will see the newly refurbished Student Room Grand Opening. Sponsors include USyd RPIS 2004 (Research Postgraduate Infrastructure Scheme), the Northern Clinical School, and Platform.z, an architectural firm that generously designed the room. After determining the needs of postgrad research students at RNSH, Platform.z created a dynamic and colourful environment which will enrich the student culture with computers for research, a projector to practice presentations, and a pool table for relaxation. The USyd Union also contributed funds, and RNSH provided the space on campus.

NCS WEBSITE - A NEW LOOK

The NCS website has a new face, thanks to the efforts of web designer Paul Della Torre (Med 4), and continuing work by Tim Probert, audiovisual coordinator. Visit us at www.ncs.usyd.edu.au

RNSH/UTS/USYD XXIst ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH MEETING



Prof Michael Field opening the Meeting

The 2004 Research Meeting was held on the 16th and 17th of November at RNSH with over 150 registrations, 17 sponsors and 60 posters, which is an increase from last year's event. The Organising Committee, comprising Faculty from both universities and RNSH staff, developed a program to incorporate the diverse research interests of the three institutions.

Professor Michael Field opened the meeting, followed by a plenary presentation by Professor Andrew Coats on Research Governance, and thereafter by 6 symposia, another two plenary sessions and the Young Investigators symposium. This year there were 45 applications for the Young Investigators Award and there were 8 finalists, the winner being Dr Carolyn Orr.

The Organising Committee invited Dr Fiona Wood, Director of the Western Australia Burns Service, to present at Grand Rounds. She was subsequently named Australian of the Year on Australia Day 2005. Dr Wood gave an enthusiastic and informative presentation to a capacity audience. The closing ceremony and award presentations were presided over by Professor John Rice and Ms Deborah Latta.

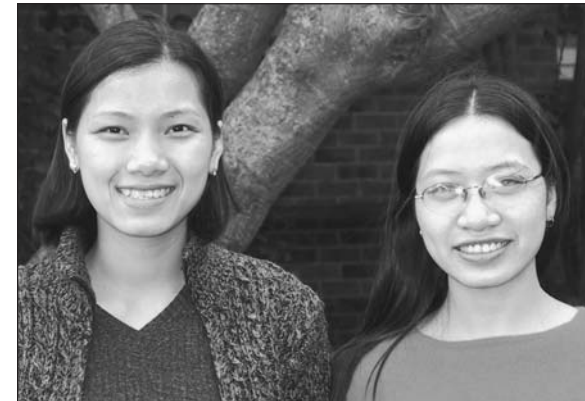


Prof Andrew Coats delivers the Plenary Address



The Organising Committee: Front L to R: Dr Janet Martin, Dr Bronwyn O'Brien, Dr Susie Mihailidou, Ms Penny Martin, Dr Lyn Schedlich. Back L to R: Dr Dale Bailey, Mr Peter Meier, Dr Peter Hansen.

FIRST VIETNAMESE MEDICAL STUDENTS ON ELECTIVE AT NCS



Mai Phuong Thi Nguyen and Nga Phuong Thi Nga at RNSH

Every year since the inception of the Hoc Mai student scholarship scheme, a number of Med 2 students from NCS have visited Hanoi, Hue or Danang. In 2004 it was decided that in addition, two students from Hanoi Medical University would visit the Northern Clinical School for a medical elective. In August, Mai Phuong Thi Nguyen and Nga Phuong Thi Nga spent 3 weeks at RNSH. Mai was allocated to Cardiothoracic Surgery and Nga to Neurology. Nga said "Three weeks in Sydney was a happy time we will never forget. We had the opportunity to work with some excellent doctors, we gained more clinical experience and learned about different departments in the Hospital. We made friends with the medical students who were so kind. Now, we have more confidence and dreams for our future career and lives".

STAFF NEWS



IN MEMORY OF ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR PHILIP McMANIS

The Clinical School extends condolences to the family of Dr Philip McManis, who died on 17 September 2004.

Philip was appointed Associate Professor in Medicine at the University of Sydney in 2002, after commencing work at RNSH in January 1999. He was an active and greatly valued teacher of Neurology at NCS, coordinating SCORPIOs, and conducting PBL Plenaries and tutorials for Year 2 students. Students reported that his tutorials were 'fantastic', 'encouraging', and 'inspiring'. They stated that his systematic approach made a complex subject easy to understand. He is greatly missed.

TWO NEW SUB DEANS APPOINTED

New Sub-Deans have been appointed at NCS to assist the Associate Dean in the management of the medical teaching program.

Dr Rory Clifton-Bligh is Sub-Dean for Medicine and A/Prof Margaret Schnitzler is Sub-Dean for Surgery. They will be responsible for mentoring students, liaising between clinicians (Registrars as well as senior staff) and the Clinical School, and generally supporting the delivery of the medical course in their respective fields.

The Clinical School and the University are grateful to them for their willingness to take on these roles. They can be contacted through the Executive Officer of NCS.



Dr M Schnitzler



Dr R Clifton-Bligh

TEACHING NEWS

ADOLESCENT HEALTH IN SCHOOLS PROGRAM PILOT PROJECT

The Faculty of Medicine Year 4 term committees have supported a plan to run a new program, developed at Hornsby Hospital by Dr Carol Kefford, which integrates aspects of the Community, Psychological Medicine and Paediatrics/Adolescent Health terms. It is hoped that involvement in this program will allow students to meet some of their assessment tasks in these terms, and at the same time develop skills in an integrated approach to adolescent health issues. We recognise that there is some overlap between the assessment tasks in the four rotations, and this is an attempt to integrate the terms in the domain of Adolescent Health, and to extend "options" for final year students.

The program is based on an acknowledgement that adolescents do not commonly attend doctor's surgeries, and access health information from a variety of community-based sources. Participants will receive training in adolescent health issues including sexual health, substance use, and psychological health, and will then attend high schools in northern Sydney where they will be teamed with a local doctor to lead an interactive discussion with groups of Year 11 students.

NORTHERN CLINICAL SKILLS CENTRE SURGICAL SKILLS WORKSHOP

In October 2004 the Skills Centre ran the inaugural Surgical Skills Workshop for Advanced Surgical Trainees in General Surgery (Years 1 & 2) in the North-Eastern Surgical rotation over 1.5 days. The program was designed to teach aspects of peri-operative skills in a modular format with close interaction with experienced surgeons.

This workshop included practical sessions on patient positioning on the operating table, advanced instrument handling, gastrointestinal and vascular anastomosis, tissue dissection, and advanced wound management. Novel resources included mock-patients, as well as animal and synthetic tissue where appropriate. A particularly successful part of the program was the didactic component, which incorporated operative videos and small group discussion on various open and laparoscopic procedures. The procedures targeted were

those commonly performed by Year 1 and 2 trainees, including laparoscopic cholecystectomy, right hemicolectomy, appendicectomy, and the stripping of varicose veins.

The course was co-ordinated by Dr Thomas Hugh, with support from Dr Sameer Mirshahi and Dr Rachel Day. Of course, the Workshop was only possible because of the enthusiastic and committed teaching faculty from the RNSH Department of Surgery. The following gave generously of their time: A/Prof Margaret Schnitzler, A/Prof Ross Smith, Dr Justin Evans, Dr Rob Gates, Dr Steve Liebman, Dr Vikram Puttaswamy, Dr Garrett Smith, Dr Michael Neale, and Dr Tim Wagner. Johnson & Johnson Medical generously supported this inaugural course.



Surgical Skills Workshop

Dr Garrett Smith demonstrating the finer points of patient positioning in the mock operating theatre. This session included discussion on various procedures and the rationale behind specific positioning on the operating table, with hands-on experience using real life operating table accessories and a mock patient.

The surgical trainees rated the course very highly, and many have expressed their interest in participating in the next stage, a more advanced course designed specifically for Year 3 & 4 trainees. The Northern and Eastern advanced surgical trainees will be offered this course in early 2005.

TEACHING NEWS

LEARNING THROUGH INNOVATION

The Northern Clinical Skills Centre in collaboration with Dr Andrew Ellis, Dept of Orthopaedic & Traumatic Surgery, and the Office of Teaching & Learning in Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, has developed two web-based multi-media teaching resources for the University of Sydney Medical Program. The aim was to develop practical, clinical education materials to complement the curriculum and provide an easily accessed revision tool for the students in all stages of the Program. The topics that have been

covered are Immobilisation of the Spine, and Hip Examination, which are studied in the Year 2 Neurosciences and Year 1 Musculoskeletal Sciences Blocks respectively. The resources combine video footage with narration, photographic stills, illustration and theory with reference material. The material provides the viewer with a comprehensive understanding of the topic. The resources received overwhelmingly positive feedback from students and were a valuable tool for exam revision.



Examination of the Hip

An excerpt from the Hip Examination web-resource. It is part of a video in which Dr Andrew Ellis is examining the pseudo-patient standing and discussing various aspects of the examination such as alignment, stance, muscle wasting etc. The resource illustrates all aspects of a hip examination including the Trendelenberg and Thomas' Tests and gait assessment.

Presently, a knee examination resource is being developed and we hope to develop more in 2005. If you would like to develop a resource for the Medical Program, or if any students are looking for an Honours project, we would welcome your participation in the project team, as everyone involved found the project very enjoyable, and it did not involve significant

amounts of time. There are many potential topics for which resources could be developed, from musculoskeletal, neurology, gynaecology, to ophthalmology. For more information or to discuss this further, please contact Dr Andrew Ellis on 9926 5973 or Dr Rachel Day on 9926 6189.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS



Dr Cate Storey



Dr Bruno Giuffre

Special congratulations to Cate Storey (Neurology) and Bruno Giuffre (Radiology), teachers of long standing at NCS, who were recently awarded Clinical Associate Professor titles by the University of Sydney Faculty of Medicine. Amongst their achievements, Dr Storey has created innovative course material for medical students,

provided leadership in Neurology teaching at NCS, and developed the training schedule for the position of Stroke Fellow at RNSH, a model of curriculum development in postgraduate training. Dr Giuffre has coordinated a weekly Radiology tutorial program and the overall departmental teaching for medical students. He was also a member of the Undergraduate Teaching Committee in Radiology, contributing towards development of a curriculum for teaching across all sites of the Faculty.

Congratulations also to Geoff Herkes and Simon Finfer, appointed Clinical Associate Professors, to Roger Stancliffe, Stephen Jurd and Rodney Baber, promoted to Clinical Associate Professor, to Rory Clifton-Bligh, Lisa Harvey and Katrina Moore, appointed to Senior Lecturer positions, to Ann Moseley, promoted to Senior Lecturer, and to Issy Pilowsky who was made an Honorary Professor.