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Impact of time of diagnosis on out-of-pocket costs of cancer treatment, a side effect of health insurance design in Australia

Many patients with cancer face high out-of-pocket (OOP) costs. The extended Medicare Safety Net (EMSN) was implemented by the Australian government in 2004 to assist patients with OOP costs that are incurred out-of-hospital and delivered under the Medicare Benefits Scheme (MBS). In a calendar year, once a patient reaches a pre-specified threshold in their OOP spending, the EMSN provides additional financial assistance (up to 80% of OOP costs) for eligible treatment for the remainder of the calendar year. The pre-specified threshold as at January 2023 was \$770.30 for concession card holders and \$2414 for the general population. Eligible medical services include general practice, specialist consultations, some allied health consultations, as well as cancer treatments such as radiation oncology and the administering of chemotherapy.

Given its design over a calendar year, patients who are diagnosed with a condition earlier in the year may accrue higher benefits (once they reach their threshold) than those who are diagnosed later in the year. For cancer patients this is particularly important because many cancer treatments are delivered over an extended period of time, which means that cancer patients may be required to utilise the EMSN twice for the same episode of care if that episode crossed over two years.

Naghsh-Nejad & van Gool (2024) examined OOP costs incurred by cancer patients and the impact of the EMSN using the 45 and Up Study data, Medicare claims data and the NSW Cancer Registry. Using a linear estimation model, they examined the

influence of the quarter of the year in which patients were diagnosed on OOP costs for individuals diagnosed with cancer each year and accounted for the individuals' age, private health insurance, their residential location (metro or non-metro area), an indicator for the socioeconomic quantile of their residence (SEIFA), stages of cancer diagnosis and cancer type.

The authors found that patients who were required to meet the higher EMSN threshold (i.e., general population) and who were diagnosed in quarter 4 had significantly higher OOP costs compared to those diagnosed in the earlier part of the year. For patients who were required to meet the lower EMSN threshold (i.e. concession card holders), the time of diagnosis was not significant. The authors then compared OOP costs to randomly selected patients in the 45 and Up cohort who did not have a cancer diagnosis. There were no last quarter effects for the randomly drawn sample of individuals.

Patients with cancer may incur high OOP costs over an extended period. This implies that in the year following their cancer diagnosis, some patients will need to meet the EMSN threshold once and others will face the threshold twice which increases the costs they incur. The authors suggest that this unintended consequence of the EMSN could be rectified if patients could qualify for EMSN benefits for 12 months from the point of reaching the threshold, rather than for the remaining calendar year.

Contributed by:

Lutfun Hossain

Reference:

Naghsh-Nejad, M. and van Gool, K. (2024) 'Impact of time of diagnosis on out-of-pocket costs of cancer treatment, a side effect of health insurance design in Australia.', *Health Policy*, 145, p. 105055. doi:10.1016/j.healthpol.2024.105055.



Australian and New Zealand Childrens Haematology/Oncology Group(ANZCHOG)

Trial Updates

ANZCHOG continues to partner with a range of government, philanthropic and charity groups to develop new trials and bring more international paediatric oncology trials to Australia and New Zealand.

Some of our recent trial updates include:

Interfant-21 Opens at First Australian Site

International collaborative treatment protocol for infants under one year with KMT2A rearranged acute lymphoblastic leukaemia or mixed phenotype acute leukaemia. Opened at first Australian site, Perth Children's Hospital, in May 2024, with a further seven Australian and two New Zealand sites still to open.

BEACON2 and VICTORY studies awarded funding by Australian Government

ANZCHOG will receive more than \$2.5 million in support of two international paediatric cancer clinical trials; **BEACON2** and **VICTORY**. Through the Medical Research Future Fund (Clinical Trial Activity for Rare Cancers, Rare Diseases and Unmet Need), the trials will each receive funding for up to five years.

BEACON2: A multi-arm multi-stage platform trial for relapsed neuroblastoma.

VICTORY: A pilot study to investigate the safety and efficacy of weekly combination of intravenous vinblastine with oral type II RAF inhibitor Tovorafenib in paediatric patients with recurrent/progressive RAF Altered (non-NFI) low-grade gliomas.



REGO-EWING trial opens in third Australian state

Phase Ib study of the combination of regorafenib with conventional chemotherapy for the treatment of newly diagnosed patients with multimetastatic Ewing Sarcoma. Opened at Monash Children's Hospital in April 2024, having opened earlier this year at Perth Children's Hospital and Queensland Children's Hospital.

ANZCHOG 2024 ASM

Our 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) will run from 1 – 3 August. It's all happening in Adelaide (Tartanya) this year, with the theme, **“Sparking hope through cutting edge technologies and collaborative care. Tangka parranthi.”**. Tangka parranthi means “sparking hope” in the native language of the Kurna people, the traditional owners of the Adelaide Plains of South Australia.

The ASM is an important opportunity for people from different disciplines to collaborate, share ideas and take part in professional development, ensuring we're pursuing our commitment to improving care for children with cancer and their families. The event comprises informative sessions led by speakers from Australia, New Zealand and around the world; practical workshops relevant to our work; a chance for sub-groups to meet up in person; and opportunities to network.

For more information, and to register, please visit asm-anzchog.com.

CREST FAQ PAGE

CREST have recently published a new FAQ page covering the following topics:

- What do I need to know before planning an economic evaluation?
- What outcomes should I consider for an economic evaluation?
- The comparator
- I need help with data
- How is quality of life used in economic evaluations?
- Making sense of the economic evaluation.

ANZCHOG

Australian & New Zealand Childrens Haematology/Oncology Group

[FAQs](#)



Australia and New Zealand Sarcoma Association (ANZSA)



2024 ANZSA Annual Scientific Meeting

Registrations are now open for the 2024 ANZSA Annual Scientific Meeting!

This year's meeting will feature both in-person and online attendance for all who wish to attend. Our 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting will run alongside the 22nd International Society of Limb Salvage General Meeting 2024, which will be held on the 8th - 11th October 2024.

This year, we are excited to have paediatric oncologist, Dr. Nathalie Gaspar joining us from France.

Event details:

- **When:** Thursday, 10 - Friday, 11 October 2024
- **Venue:** Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, Merivale St, South Brisbane QLD 4101

This is a chance to hear from researchers and sarcoma specialists - from Australia and New Zealand as well as from around the world - about the most up-to-date multidisciplinary research in the sarcoma field.

[Register now to secure your spot today!](#)

Abstract submissions

Submissions for abstracts and posters for the ANZSA 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting have now opened.

Abstract/Poster submissions must be:

- received electronically via the [online form](#)
- by midnight (AEST) on Monday the 29th July 2024 and
- must include a declaration of interest.

Sarcoma Awareness Month

Join us this July as we raise awareness for one of Australia's rarest cancers!

This July, ANZSA is spotlighting the *importance of ongoing research, funding, and clinical trials to advance patient outcomes in the fight against sarcoma.*

Research fuels the discovery of treatments and improving outcomes, funding provides the necessary resources to carry out this critical research, and clinical trials offer the platform to evaluate and refine these treatments in real-world settings.

Sarcoma Awareness Month Webinars

ANZSA has partnered with the VCCC Alliance to provide two informative lunch-time webinars focusing on sarcoma treatment and research.

These webinars are open to all who wish to attend.

Webinar 1: The Role of Genetics in Sarcoma

In this webinar, leading experts in sarcoma, pathology and familial genetics provide an overview of the role of genetics in sarcoma. Join us to gain valuable insight on the utility of genetic testing in sarcoma management.

- **When:** Monday July 15th, 1pm - 2pm AEST
- **Speakers:**
 - A/Prof. Jeremy Lewin (Chair, Medical Oncologist)
 - Dr. Catherine Mitchell (Anatomical Pathologist)
 - Prof. Paul James (Clinical Geneticist)
 - Dr. Stephen Luen (Medical Oncologist)

[Register here](#)

Webinar 2: A Deep Dive into Desmoid Sarcoma

Join us as we hear from sarcoma experts and explore the complexities surrounding management of Desmoid Tumours – a noncancerous growth occurring in connective tissues. Gain a deep understanding of the multidisciplinary approaches to management of desmoid tumours.

- **When:** Thursday July 25th, 1pm - 2pm AEST
- **Speakers:**
 - A/Prof. Jeremy Lewin (Chair, Medical Oncologist)
 - Dr. Susie Bae (Medical Oncologist)
 - Dr. Julie Chu (Radiation Oncologist)
 - A/Prof. David Gyorki (Surgical Oncologist)

[Register here](#)



Australian and New Zealand Urogenital and Prostate Cancer Trials Group (ANZUP)

Some recent ANZUP trial news highlights

At the recent #ASCO24 Annual Meeting held in Chicago and online from May 30 – 3 June 2024, ANZUP had two posters featured: ENZAMET (ANZUP 1304) and TheraP (ANZUP 1603). You can view these and other relevant presentations and posters on the [ANZUP website](#).

During the quarter, our [ENZA-p trial's interim results were featured in The Lancet](#) in April. Congratulations to everyone involved!

Also our paper was released in Wiley in April: [Management of advanced prostate cancer in the Asia-Pacific region: Summary of the Asia-Pacific Advanced Prostate Cancer Consensus Conference 2023](#).

A huge thank you once again to all the PI's and trials teams for their ongoing efforts and to all the patients who take part in our trials. Your valuable contributions are greatly appreciated.

Other ANZUP news

#ANZUP24 Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) – registrations now open

Our 2024 ASM is being held in the Gold Coast from 21-23 July 2024 with the convening committee, ably led by Matt Roberts and Aaron Hansen.

Our theme for 2024 is “*Making Waves*”. The meeting will provide attendees with a forum to discuss and present the latest updates in GU cancer treatment, research and supportive care and to learn more about existing and planned ANZUP trials.

We have excellent presentations from international faculty attending this year. Consisting of: Paul Nguyen, Rob Hamilton, Ravindran Kanesvaran, Elena Castro, Bertrand Tombal and Cristiane Bergerot.



[Registrations are now open](#), and we look forward to welcoming you to this widely diverse and immersive face-to-face event.

Farewell to ANZUP volunteers Lesley and Jo

After more than 12 years as ANZUP's amazing volunteers Lesley and Jo retired from ANZUP.

The ANZUP team and our membership have benefited enormously from their generous support, great sense of fun, not to mention their organisational skills, over the years.

They will certainly be missed!

2024 Melbourne Pedalthon - it's a wrap!

The 2024 Melbourne Pedalthon was a great success with 27, teams, 146 riders completing 3,367 laps, which equated to a massive 10,438 kms!

We thank everyone who joined us out at Sandown on Sunday 21 April 2024 for their enthusiasm, comradery and dedication to fighting cancer, below the belt. A huge congratulations and thanks to all the riders and supporters for raising nearly \$45,000.

You can view all the photos from the event [in our Facebook album](#) or watch the [Below the Belt Melbourne Pedalthon Highlights video 2024 on ANZUP's YouTube channel](#).



Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials (MASC Trials)

Upcoming events

2024 Annual Scientific Meeting

Date: Thursday, 24 October 2024

Venue: Hyatt Regency Sydney

[Register here](#)

The Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) on 24 October at the Hyatt Regency Sydney will bring together Australian leaders in melanoma and skin cancer clinical trials to share the latest discoveries and foster innovative research. The full-day program will include over 20 clinician researcher and consumer speakers.

Following the ASM, a combined networking event will be held with the national team from the Australian Centre of Excellence in Melanoma Imaging and Diagnosis Program (ACEMID), which is supported by the Australian Cancer Research Foundation.

The Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials ASM is a satellite meeting of the Australasian Melanoma Conference (AMC), to be held 25-26 October 2024, also at the Hyatt Regency Sydney.

Seats are limited so get in early!

Registrations are via the AMC registration portal. [Register here](#).

Diary of an ocular melanoma patient

Blue. Beautiful. Deadly. That's how Illana Klevansky describes her eye in a series of diary entries chronicling her ocular melanoma journey. For a glimpse into her world, from her initial diagnosis to having her eye removed, and then seeing the light beyond, read Illana's [story here](#).

New Board Members

The Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials [Board of Directors](#) has welcomed two new members.



Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials Limited

Annual Scientific Meeting

24 October 2024
Sydney

Register for ASM & AMC

A satellite meeting of
AMC 2024
Australasian Melanoma Conference



“I’ve come from a drastic diagnosis to the light of living.”
Illana Klevansky

Patrick Baker is Director of The Alfred Foundation and is also a Board member with Cancer Council Victoria and The Bays Hospital. He has expertise in strategic and operational direction, including client acquisition, revenue generation and growth strategies.

Prof James Whisstock is the Deputy Dean (Research) in the Faculty of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences at Monash University. He is also the Scientific Head of the Australian EMBL partnership and has formerly held an ARC Laureate Fellowship, an ARC Federation Fellowship, and an Honorary NHMRC Senior Principal Research Fellowship.

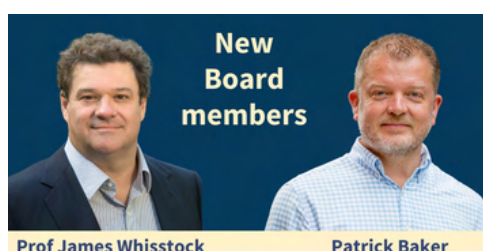
Become a member

Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials membership is open to anyone interested in our clinical research, from healthcare professionals to consumers. Applying is simple and free. Learn more about membership benefits and [apply here](#).

Sign up for eNews

Stay up-to-date with the latest Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials news and events. Sign up for our monthly [eNews here](#).

www.masc.org.au



New Board members

Prof James Whisstock Patrick Baker



A review of meaningful change thresholds for EORTC QLQ-C30 and FACT-G within oncology

Patient-reported outcomes (PROs) are a core component when evaluating healthcare interventions. This also includes evaluating health-related quality of life (HRQoL) as an input for economic evaluations to assess interventions' health benefits when converted to utilities. In cancer research, the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer Quality of Life Questionnaire Core 30 (QLQ-C30) and Functional Assessment of Cancer Therapy – General (FACT-G) questionnaires are commonly used to capture HRQoL. Additionally, there are preference based scoring algorithms that allow utility values to be estimated for both instruments; the EORTC QLU-C10D for the EORTC QLQ-C30, and the FACT-8D for the FACT-G.

The QLQ-30C (version 3) evaluates 15 domains in 30 questions:

- Functional: physical, role, emotional, cognitive, social,
- Symptoms: fatigue, nausea and vomiting, pain, dyspnoea, insomnia, appetite loss, constipation, and diarrhea.
- Financial difficulties.
- Global health status.

The FACT-G evaluates 4 domains in 27 questions:

- Physical.
- Social and family.
- Emotional.
- Functional wellbeing.

There are some differences between these instruments, not least of which arising from their respective minimal clinically important difference (MCID). MCID determines whether a score difference is clinically relevant to patients. Meaningful change thresholds can be used to estimate the proportion of patients improving or deteriorating over time, as well as the likelihood of average patient improvements. Recently, Clarke et al. (2024) aimed to describe how the MCID is currently being used and estimated in haematological cancers and solid tumours (melanoma, lung, bladder, and prostate), focusing on the QLQ-C30 and FACT-G (1).

The MCID can be determined by anchor, statistical or consensus approaches. The Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee typically prefers the anchor approach, which assesses change scores against a threshold (or anchor). Clarke et al. (2024) defined three approaches to determine meaningful change thresholds (1):

- **Legacy:** giving broad recommendations, such as a range of points for mixed populations. The most commonly used being 10 points for all QLQ-C30 (2).
- **Contemporary:** differentiates thresholds by scales/domains and accounting that improving or deteriorating scores requires different interpretations (3, 4, 5).
- **Cancer-specific:** contemporary adding cancer-specific categories.

Clarke et al. (2024) found that legacy thresholds still continue to be used. At the same time, the use of contemporary approaches is increasing, gaining awareness in cancer research. The authors also evaluated European Medicines Agency and USA Food and Drug Administration label claims of 7 recently approved drugs to assess the latest clinical trial practices yielding 32 phase 2 and phase 3 studies. 14 studies used the QLQ-C30, of which 9 used the legacy threshold, 3 used contemporary thresholds, and 4 cancer-specific thresholds. One study reported FACT-G using a legacy threshold of 3 to 7 for the mean within-group change in total score.

Contemporary thresholds provide an alternative that accounts for different scales for improved or worsening scores and can also be cancer-specific. These thresholds can also be considered in addition to legacy thresholds.

Contributed by:
Antonio Ahumada Canale

References:

1. Clarke NA, Braverman J, Worthy G, Shaw JW, Bennett B, Dhanda D, et al. A Review of Meaningful Change Thresholds for EORTC QLQ-C30 and FACT-G Within Oncology. *Value Health*. 2024;27(4):458-68.
2. Osoba D, Rodrigues G, Myles J, Zee B, Pater J. Interpreting the significance of changes in health-related quality-of-life scores. *J Clin Oncol*. 1998;16(1):139-44.
3. King MT, Cella D, Osoba D, Stockler M, Eton D, Thompson J, et al. Meta-analysis provides evidence-based interpretation guidelines for the clinical significance of mean differences for the FACT-G, a cancer-specific quality of life questionnaire. *Patient Relat Outcome Meas*. 2010;1:119-26.
4. Cocks K, King MT, Velikova G, de Castro G, Jr., Martyn St-James M, Fayers PM, et al. Evidence-based guidelines for interpreting change scores for the European Organisation for the Research and Treatment of Cancer Quality of Life Questionnaire Core 30. *Eur J Cancer*. 2012;48(11):1713-21.
5. Cocks K, King MT, Velikova G, Martyn St-James M, Fayers PM, Brown JM. Evidence-based guidelines for determination of sample size and interpretation of the European Organisation for the Research and Treatment of Cancer Quality of Life Questionnaire Core 30. *J Clin Oncol*. 2011;29(1):89-96.



CONTRACT UPDATE EXTENDED TO 2025

CREST is pleased to announce that our technical service contract has been extended to June 2025 by Cancer Australia.

We welcome this news and are excited to continue supporting the CTGs in the upcoming year.

We are planning a number of activities, including health economics workshops, a webinar series and more.

Watch this space!

Australasian Gastro-Intestinal Trials Group (AGITG)



Join us in Brisbane for our ASM: 18-21 November 2024

At this year's ASM, explore innovative trial designs, understand the significance of equitable and diverse trials, and be empowered to expand collaborations across regions for greater global impact. Travel grants are available.

[Register now for early bird pricing.](#)

Choose from one of three workshops on the first day:

Integrated Oncology Workshop

How does a trial concept progress from the back of an envelope to successful completion? After opening with a practical trial design session, an MDT discussion will follow, featuring international and national insights on both upper and lower GI oncology.

[Learn more](#)

Surgical Workshop

In the morning, attend a curated surgical oncology workshop covering HPB and colorectal surgery featuring international faculty Prof Matthew Katz (MD Anderson) and Dr Rodrigo O Perez (Hospital Alemão Oswaldo Cruz). Then in the afternoon, seize the opportunity to showcase your research or concept and receive valuable feedback from a panel of international and local experts. [Learn more](#)

Study Coordinator Workshop

An enriching workshop designed to offer a unique opportunity for study coordinators and more, featuring sessions on what good clinical trial practice looks like, holistic patient care, models of care in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand and troubleshooting and career pathways. [Learn more](#)

Call for abstracts and concepts

We invite AGITG members to submit an abstract for admission in the ASM program. In addition to a poster, your abstract could also be chosen for oral presentation, with the chance to win the Best of Posters Award. [Learn more](#)

We also invite concepts to be included in the popular New Concepts Symposium. The Symposium is an opportunity for delegates to present an embryonic idea for feedback and discussion with the audience. [Learn more](#)

Research news

We were thrilled to be invited to the Australian Comprehensive Cancer Network Innovations Showcase in May. Head of Research Operations, Nisha Berthon-Jones, detailed our journey to embed equity during her presentation titled '[Driving equitable cancer care in a clinical trial setting](#)'. We have:

- reviewed our strategy and incorporated equity pillars
- joined the Australian Teletrial Program's Sponsor Advisory Group

- conducted cultural capability training for staff
- held last year's ASM in Aotearoa New Zealand spotlighting equity, diversity and inclusion in GI cancer clinical research
- initiated turnover of research committees to represent a broad, diverse membership and strengthen processes and quality
- activated the first cross-jurisdictional teletrial cluster with Queen Elizabeth Hospital, SA and Royal Darwin Hospital, NT
- revised our Study Budget Development Policy to include travel reimbursement for patients
- published our EDI statement

We are proud to be committed to equity, diversity and inclusion. [Read our EDI statement](#)

In other research news, congratulations to the INTEGRATE IIb team for completing recruitment on a strong note. With 462 people enrolled, we are hoping to see positive news from the trial for people with advanced gastro-oesophageal carcinoma. [View our open trials.](#)

Stay up to date with AGITG

Follow us on [LinkedIn](#) or [@GICancer](#) on X/Twitter for more updates.



Australia New Zealand Gynaecological Oncology Group (ANZGOG)

ANZGOG TRIAL UPDATE

ANZGOG is fortunate to have active and engaged members working locally and globally to bring new trials to Australia and New Zealand for our community with a lived experience of gynaecological cancer. ANZGOG clinical trials open to recruitment:

Ovarian cancer trials:

- **HyNOVA** in collaboration with the NHRMC Clinical Trials Centre and ANZGOG
- **IGNITE** an ANZGOG study as part of the OASIS Initiative
- **RAMP 301** an ENGOT option C collaborative study sponsored by Verastem in collaboration with ANZGOG, European Network of Gynaecological Oncological Trial Groups (ENGOT), and GOG Foundation.

Endometrial cancer trials:

- **ENDO-3** in collaboration with Queensland Centre for Gynaecological Cancer
- **ADELE** in collaboration with the University of Sydney, NHRMC Clinical Trials Centre
- **DOMENICA** a global study sponsored by ARCAGY-GINECO in collaboration with ANZGOG
- **XPORT-EC-42** a global study led by Karyopharm Therapeutics (Global Sponsor), in collaboration with ANZGOG, European Network of Gynaecological Oncological Trial Groups (ENGOT) and GOG Foundation.
- **EN.10/TAPER** a global study led by Canadian Cancer Trials Group (CCTG) (International sponsor) in collaboration with ANZGOG

Combined ovarian + endometrial cancer trials:

- **PARAGON II** in collaboration with the University of Sydney, NHMRC Clinical Trials Centre and
- **EPOCH** a global study led by ANZGOG in collaboration with Imperial College London, UK and Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, Canada.

Quality of life/end of life study:

- **PEACE** in collaboration with the Nordic Society of Gynaecological Oncology – Clinical Trial Unit.

ANZGOG clinical trials in start-up:

- one survey study: **EXPRESSION IX**

For more information on ANZGOG's trials, please visit [our website](#).

[#AdvancingResearchSavingLives](#)



ANZGOG 2024 ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING

333 delegates met in Wellington for ANZGOG's landmark 2024 ASM to discuss the groundbreaking theme 'Breaking Down Barriers in Gynaecological Cancer Care', shining a light on the cultural, socioeconomic and regional diversity of our patients and highlighting many opportunities for improving equity of access to care.

Yet again, the ANZGOG ASM proved to be an outstanding opportunity for researchers and clinicians alike to attend this meeting and meet with leaders in gynae oncology, both nationally and internationally. We hope that this conference has sparked the beginning of many positive changes in the gynaecological cancer care space over the next few years.

We look forward to another dynamic conference next year.

Save the date for ANZGOG 2025 ASM:

**5-7 March 2025
Hyatt Hotel Canberra, ACT**

[Read the conference round-up](#)

[Read the Research Review conference review](#)



ANZGOG 2024 RECOGNITION AWARDS

Over 200 delegates attended the ASM conference dinner to witness the awards, where five ANZGOG members/sites were recognised for their outstanding contributions to advancing gynaecological cancer research and saving lives. Congratulations to the below winners:

- **Michael Friedlander AM Award:** Dr Nicola Meagher
- **Research Pioneer Award:** Professor Anna DeFazio AM
- **ANZGOG Chair's Community Volunteer Award:** Ms Wanda Lawson
- **Clinical Trial Achievement Award:** Associate Professor Alison Davis
- **Outstanding Clinical Trial Site Award:** Auckland City Hospital, Te Whatu Ora Te Toka Tumai

[Read more](#)



Prof Clare Scott AM
MB BS PhD Melbourne FRACP
Chair | ANZGOG



Advancing research
saving lives



TransTasman Radiation Oncology Group (TROG)



TROG 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting

TROG Cancer Research is thrilled to announce the successful conclusion of our 36th Annual Scientific Meeting, which took place at City Hall in our hometown of Newcastle, NSW from the 12th - 15th of March.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the sponsors particularly major sponsors Varian, Elekta and ICON as well as ASN Events and Co convenors Jane Ludbrook and Joerg Lehmann who lead the 36th ASM organising committee. Your invaluable contributions made this event a resounding success.

It was wonderful to see well in excess of 250 delegates travel from across the country as well as New Zealand and beyond. From insightful presentations and workshops to engaging discussions, the meeting provided a platform for cutting-edge research and collaboration in the field of radiation therapy. This year's Clinical Research Education (CREW) and Technical Research (TRW) workshops both hosted groups of 61 and the RANZCR SMART workshop comprised of 37, with high levels of engagement from all of this year's participants.

Presentation highlights include our keynote speakers Prof. Stephane Supiot who travelled from France to present on Vascular remodelling during radiotherapy at low and ultra-high dose rate (FLASH) and USA's Prof. Stephen Kry who presented in plenary sessions for both Head Neck & Skin and Radiobiology.

Thank you to everyone involved for making this year's Scientific Meeting truly memorable.

We are already looking ahead to our 37th ASM to be held in Brisbane from 18th to 21st March 2025.

Be sure to save the date in your calendars!

New TROG President

During the Annual Scientific Meeting, we welcomed A/Prof. Puma Sundaresan as the TROG President. During her time as a Director with TROG, Puma has demonstrated exemplary leadership qualities, having served on numerous committees within and externally to TROG and takes the baton from Prof. Trevor Leong, who will continue on the Board of Directors for a transition period.

TROG Board Updates

We welcomed A/Prof. Georgia Halkett was appointed onto the TROG Board of Directors. Georgia is a senior research fellow at Curtin University and is Co-Lead for the Cancer Domain in the Curtin Health Innovation Research Institute and we welcome her fresh perspectives. Dr. Melissa James was re-elected as the New Zealand representative, reaffirming her pivotal role in fostering collaborations and partnerships within the region.

It was with gratitude and appreciation, that we note the departure of Dr. Fiona Hegi-Johnson from our TROG Board, who not only served as a valued member of our Board but also made significant contributions to the FARM Committee.



Thoracic Oncology Group Australia (TOGA)

TOGA brings a Lung Cancer Screening Multidisciplinary Workshop with the upcoming Annual Scientific Meeting

TOGA will be hosting the TOGA [Annual Scientific Meeting \(ASM\)](#) for 2024 at the Sheraton Grand Sydney on 1-2 August, with a Lung Cancer Screening Multidisciplinary Workshop held on 31 July.

This workshop aims to provide an update on the National Lung Cancer Screening Program (NLCSP) implementation and the changes lung cancer screening will bring to each of the major clinical disciplines involved in lung cancer care.

Join the most innovative and influential minds in the lung cancer community, including respiratory medicine, medical oncology, radiation oncology, pathology, surgery, and nursing to receive the latest news on the NLCSP. The workshop will be Chaired by Dr Tracy Leong, Director of Bronchoscopy, Respiratory and Sleep Physician, at Austin Health.



Charting New Horizons:
A Multidisciplinary Approach to Lung Cancer Screening and Care

Annual Scientific Meeting
Pre-event Workshops: 31 July 2024
ASM: 1-2 August 2024
Sheraton Grand Sydney Hyde Park

The ASM will be the event to feature [multidisciplinary topics](#) relevant to thoracic cancer care in Australia and New Zealand. Join us for in-person presentations by our international speakers, Professors Philip Crosbie, Myung-Ju Ahn, and Dr Jessica Donington.

The [2024 program](#) includes valuable perspectives from a diverse range of local speakers tackling a variety of topical issues such as: *Future of Lung Cancer Nursing in Australia, Equitable Access to Quality Care and Clinical Trials, and Treatment Strategies to Overcome Osimertinib Resistance.*

[Register now](#) and secure your spot.

Cooperative Trials Group for Neuro-Oncology (COGNO)



COGNO
COOPERATIVE TRIALS GROUP FOR NEURO-ONCOLOGY

16th COGNO ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING
Precision Targets: Personalised Care in Neuro-Oncology
13th – 15th October 2024 | Melbourne, VIC, Australia
www.cogno.org.au | #COGNO24

Save the date and mark your calendars, the 16th COGNO Annual Scientific Meeting will be held at The Langham, Melbourne VIC on Sunday 13th October - Tuesday 15th October 2024.

We are excited to announce this year's theme - "*Precision Targets: Personalised Care in Neuro-Oncology*". Co-Convenors Dr Elizabeth Ahern, Medical Oncologist and Dr Andrew Gogos, Neurosurgeon and the ASM Organising Committee are planning an engaging, informative program which will include highly

regarded international and local speakers.

Confirmed international speakers include -

- [Professor Shawn Hervey-Jumper](#) - COGNO supported faculty
- [Dr Erin Dunbar](#) - Courtesy of Brain Tumour Alliance Australia (BTAA)
- [Professor Daniel Trifiletti](#) - Courtesy of Stereotactic Interest Group of Australasia (SIGA)

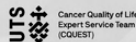
- [Dr Mark Bilsky](#) - Courtesy of Stereotactic Interest Group of Australasia (SIGA)
- [Associate Professor Pim J French](#) - Courtesy of Australian Brain Cancer Research Alliance (ABCARA)

To join our mailing list for regular updates, email asm2024@cogno.org with your interest.

ASM registration and abstract submissions opening soon!



Choosing the right PROMs for cancer clinical research



Choosing the right PROMs for cancer clinical research

Wednesday, 21 August 2024 | 12 - 1.30 PM AEST

Run annually, this workshop is for CCTG members who:

- want to learn more about the conceptual frameworks for guiding choice of patient reported outcome measures (PROMs)
- are developing a concept and want advice on the right PROMs to include in their study (feel free to bring along a concept to discuss)

[Register today](#)



Maximising the value of quality of life assessment while minimising burden: A workshop for consumers

THURS, 28 NOV 2024 | 2 - 5 PM AEST | ONLINE



Maximising the value of quality-of-life assessment while minimising burden: A workshop for consumers

Thursday 28 November | 2 - 5 PM AEST

This 3-hour online workshop is for consumers and community representatives. During the workshop, we'll cover the selection and implementation of patient reported outcome measures (PROMs) and examine how quality of life outcomes can impact decision-making and future clinical practice beyond the clinical trial.

[Register today](#)



TRAINING & MENTORING

CREST STRUCTURED TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

The CREST Structured Training Opportunity (STO) will help you build skills in the use of health economics methods for the analysis of clinical trials and similar projects.

Discover a hands-on approach to building your health economics skills and knowledge. If you're working on a clinical trial or cancer research, understanding health economics components is vital. The Structured Training Opportunity program by CREST, is design exclusively for members of Cancer Australia Clinical Trials Groups (CTGs).

As an STO participant, you'll receive:

- Expert guidance from a CREST health economist for your eligible project
- 30 to 40 hours of mentoring (typically across three months)
- Face-to-face sessions at the CREST office (complemented by online, phone and email support).

If you're a CTG member with a project featuring a health economics component, and you're keen to explore its suitability for the STO program, reach out to us at crest@uts.edu.au.

Please note: CREST is unable to sponsor individuals for participation in this opportunity.

Breast Cancer Trials (BCT)



JCOG
Japan Clinical Oncology Group



45th Annual Scientific Meeting

The Cairns Convention Centre, Queensland, Australia
Wed 24 – Fri 26 July 2024

The theme for this ASM is 'International Collaboration in Breast Cancer Trials', with a number of world-leading researchers discussing this important topic. Don't miss out on the premier event to stay up to date with breast cancer clinical trials research.

bct2024.org



45th Annual Scientific Meeting

The Cairns Convention Centre in Queensland will host the Breast Cancer Trials 45th Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM), from 24 -26 July 2024.

This is the premier event to stay up to date with breast cancer clinical trials research, and delegates include leading Australian and New Zealand medical practitioners, clinicians, and clinical trials management personnel.

Breast Cancer Trials has a strong history of bringing the world's best and brightest minds to the ASM each year and our international guest speakers are:

- **Associate Professor Erica Mayer** – Director of Clinical Research and an Institute Physician in the Breast Oncology Centre at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, and Associate Professor in Medicine at Harvard Medical School in the United States.
- **Professor Michel Gnant** – Professor of Surgery at the Medical University of Vienna, Austria, where he also serves as President of the Austrian Breast & Colorectal Cancer Study Group.

- **Dr Carlos Barrios** – Adjunct Assistant Professor of the William Harrington Latin American Program at the University of Miami School of Medicine, Director and Principal Investigator of the Oncology Research Centre at Hospital Sao Lucas, and Director of Clinical Research and Oncologist of the Oncoclinicas Group in Porto Alegre.
- **Professor Andrew Tutt** – Head of the Division of Breast Cancer Research and Director of the Breast Cancer Now Tony Robins Research Centre at the ICR and Guy's Hospital King's College London.
- **Professor Elinor Sawyer** – Consultant Clinical Oncologist at Guy's & St Thomas' Hospital and Professor of Oncology at King's College London.
- **Dr Peter Barry** – Consultant Surgeon at The Breast Uni, Royal Marsden.
- **Professor In Hae Park** – Professor in the division of Hemato-Oncology at the Korean University College of Medicine and Guro Hospital.
- **Dr Akihiko Shimomura** – National Cancer Centre Hospital, Tokyo, Japan, and representative from the Japan Clinical Oncology Group.

The extensive program includes:

- two days of scientific sessions covering timing reviews of research developments.
- the discussion of new protocols and future clinical trials research.
- sponsored breakfast and lunch symposium sessions.
- a conference dinner at the Convention Centre.
- a trainee and early career weekend on 27 and 28 July.

To register or find out more, visit www.bct2024.org



The Primary Care Collaborative Cancer Clinical Trials Group (PC4)

RECENTLY FUNDED

People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background face disparities in cancer care and outcomes. There are a range of gaps in providing culturally and linguistically appropriate cancer care, particularly in the survivorship space, where unique and diverse barriers exist.

More than \$1.4 million in MRFF funding has been awarded to Associate Professor Carolyn Ee (Co-Chair of PC4's *Living With and Beyond Cancer Engine Room*) to undertake the PEARL study: *PatiEnt nAvigation to improve outcomes in people affected by cancer from cultuRally and Linguistically diverse backgrounds*. Associate Professor Ee will lead a team to implement and evaluate a patient navigation program designed to reduce barriers that affect Chinese and Vietnamese-speaking people as they transition back to primary care after cancer treatment.

Find out more [here](#).

CURRENTLY OPEN

Liver cancer is currently the 7th most common cause of cancer deaths in Australia, with mortality rates growing faster than any other cancer. Despite a range of known risk factors, Australia does not have a national screening program for liver disease or cancer.

The IC3 (Identifying Cirrhosis and liver Cancer in primary Care) Trial will examine the effectiveness of an early detection and monitoring program for liver disease in the general practice setting, aiming to improve early diagnosis and health outcomes for patients.

We are aiming to recruit approximately 3000 Australians between 45 and 75 years of age with risk factor(s) for chronic liver disease across regional and metropolitan general practice sites across New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and Victoria. This interventional trial will use blood testing and ultrasounds to determine if regular screening and entrance into a liver cancer surveillance program is required.

The banner features the PC4 logo on the left. To its right, the text reads 'PC4 TRIAL SNAPSHOT' and 'THE PRIMARY CARE COLLABORATIVE CANCER CLINICAL TRIALS GROUP'. A magnifying glass icon is in the top right corner. Below this, three categories are listed: 'RECENTLY FUNDED', 'CURRENTLY OPEN', and 'RECENTLY PUBLISHED'. Under 'RECENTLY FUNDED' is the 'PEARL STUDY \$1.4M+' with a photo of a woman and the text 'Patient navigation to improve outcomes in people affected by cancer from CALD backgrounds'. Under 'CURRENTLY OPEN' is the 'IC3 Liver Health Trial' with a logo and the text 'Identifying Cirrhosis and Liver Cancer in Primary Care'. Under 'RECENTLY PUBLISHED' is the 'SMART screen' with a smartphone icon and the text 'SMS sent by general practices to enhance uptake of bowel cancer screening'.

IC3 is an MRFF-funded trial. For further information please contact Dr Deborah de Guingan deborahd@unimelb.edu.au.

The SMARTscreen trial was supported by the Victorian Cancer Agency. [Watch this short video](#) to learn more.

TRIAL RESULTS

Australia has one of the highest incidences of colorectal cancer (CRC) worldwide. To reduce the morbidity and mortality caused by CRC, the Australian Government implemented the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program (NBCSP). However, completion of the test within the free kit is low (40.9%), dropping to 33.4% in the 50–60-year-old age group.

The SMARTscreen study examined whether a SMS sent by general practices would increase completion of the faecal test. Results showed an increase of 16.5% in groups that were sent the SMS versus those who were not, providing robust evidence to support a larger trial (SMARTERscreen, currently underway).

Were you at Ca-PRI?

PC4 hosted the 15th Cancer in Primary Care Conference (Ca-PRI) in Melbourne in April. Delegates heard from Cancer Australia's Professor Dorothy O'Keefe before participating in an equity-focused session covering Australia's plan to eliminate cervical cancer by 2035.

This was the largest Cancer in Primary Care Conference to date, with thirty-two percent of delegates travelling from overseas and strong clinical contingent, with a quarter of participants identifying as medical practitioners or GPs. We hope to see you in Manchester for Ca-PRI 2025!



The Psycho-oncology Co-operative Research Group (PoCoG)

PoCoG Concept Development Workshop: End of life, palliative care & bereavement care

PoCoG's [End of Life Care Special Interest Group](#) hosted a Concept Development Workshop on the 30th May which brought together Psycho-Oncology experts from across Australia through PoCoG's Stakeholder Advisory Committee and Community Advisory Group.

The day provided researchers an opportunity to present concepts centred around the theme of end of life, palliative and bereavement care. The workshop facilitated discussion and allowed researchers to receive feedback to provide guidance and assistance with development of their research projects. Health economic considerations were important considerations on the day. Concepts presented included death anxiety, evaluation of volunteer-run biography services and evaluation of drug burden and performance status in palliative care.

Dr Nicci Bartley who presented a concept reflects on the day "The CDW was a really valuable experience. It was a great opportunity for me to present my research ideas to a range of Psycho-Oncology experts and the discussion that followed was very helpful in refining my ideas and thinking about the best way to progress this research."

"Being able to bring together leading Psycho-Oncology clinicians and researchers to share their expertise and further develop research in the field of Psycho-Oncology is such an integral part of PoCoG's work and we are already looking forward to hosting the next workshop later in the year. The Concept Development Workshop presents a unique opportunity to receive a real-time review of your project, to ask questions and to brainstorm ideas to move your project forward. I am excited to see how the concepts presented evolve into research projects and progress the Psycho-Oncology field." says PoCoG Scientific Advisory Committee Chair Associate Professor Haryana Dhillon.



[PoCoG's End of Life Care Special Interest Group](#) is comprised of clinicians and researchers interested in End of Life (EoL) Care and aims to optimise the quality of life for people, their families and carers approaching and reaching the end of life through EoL research, international collaboration and sharing information.

If you are interested in tapping into PoCoG's network of expertise, joining one of their special interest groups or staying up-to-date through their newsletter and member updates join PoCoG and become a member [here](#).



DID YOU KNOW? CREST RESOURCES

Did you know we have a dedicated section on our website full of resources to help investigators incorporate health economics and pharmacoeconomic analyses into trial protocols?

On our page we have available:

- Proforma documents for conducting an economic evaluation
- How to collect data
- How to estimate QoL scores
- Various factsheets and templates
- Video recordings of past workshops and webinars such as using Medicare data and HTA
- A number of useful links

If you have any suggestions for resources, please feel free to discuss with us by emailing crest@uts.edu.au

[Resources](#) >

Journal of Medical Radiation Sciences (JMRS) invites authors to submit articles to a special themed issue on Value Based Medical Radiation Sciences

BACKGROUND

Value based healthcare is ensuring healthcare is delivered to maximise outcomes that matter the most to the people receiving and delivering the healthcare, and balancing the costs to achieve those outcomes. A value based approach is not about "budget-cutting" but rather focussed on ensuring that the care we provide is of value to patients, health care professionals and the health system. The demand for medical radiation sciences (MRS) services, including medical imaging and radiation therapy, is expected to rise as advances in medicine has led to earlier disease detection and treatment. Coupled with the continued introduction of new MRS technologies, increased demand has implications on experiences in delivering and receiving care as well as costs. Value based MRS practices can ensure that we maximise the resources available to deliver care that meets the needs of the patient/population, and the health services/systems. This special edition will explore value based MRS practices through the perspectives of the patient, MRS professional and the health system.

THEME

MRS professionals play a significant role in the healthcare system and it is important that we look for ways to provide care that is valuable to the patient, health professionals, and the health system. Value based MRS provides a broad scope of possible avenues to explore and report on. Both quantitative and qualitative work will be sought for inclusion to present an issue that encompasses a wholistic view of value in MRS.

TOPICS

Potential topics include, but are not limited to:

- Assessing the value of new technologies, compared to standard practices (e.g. use of AI-enabled diagnostic imaging equipment to reduce repeated images, decreasing both dose and time for the patient)
- Patient-centred initiatives (e.g. evaluating and incorporating patient preferences in MRS departmental planning)
- Improvements in care delivery (e.g. a dedicated radiation therapist coordinator role to increase patient understanding and compliance)
- Changes in education programs and professional practices (e.g. advanced practice roles impacting value-based care through increased patient throughput; or virtual simulation in the university sector preparing MRS students for real-world scenarios)

All manuscript types will be considered, including original research articles, review papers and case studies. Before submission, authors should carefully read over the Journal's Author Guidelines, which are available at: www.jmrsjournal.com

On the cover page/letter, please state that your manuscript is to be considered for the special themed issue.



jmrsjournal.com

WILEY

SUBMISSION DEADLINE:
31 JULY 2024

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To find out more and contribute to this special edition visit jmrsjournal.com