Update from the Clinical Associate Dean

Dear colleagues

Welcome to the St George and Sutherland Clinical School winter newsletter. The year is inexorably moving on, but bringing with it a lot of changes, some exciting, some potentially unsettling. Strategic direction has become both burden and boon, as the UNSW Vice Chancellor, Ian Jacobs, pushes ahead with the university’s 2025 vision. It’s clear this is not about creating a document to sit on shelves for the next eight years: there is strong push to implement major changes in ethos, structure and profile. There will be funding to support innovative changes in teaching and research, but fulfilling the promise of new leaders recruited to UNSW ranks inevitably will bring choices about where to remove funding – people, and programs. The Dean of UNSW Medicine, Rodney Phillips, has also established some significant changes in the way that research in particular will be structured, with streaming of researchers to create both efficiencies and collaborative allegiances. Many of you have already been involved in these discussions and they have created genuine enthusiasm about our own engagement.

These higher level changes coincide with a strong desire at St George and Sutherland for research to become more prominent, supported and unified. The Academic Council has begun an examination of pathways we might take here that align with UNSW Medicine streams and build on our longstanding and new strengths. There’ll be much more to say on this front in coming months.

It’s always surprising how the simplest things can provide new impetus. We should all be grateful for the way Emad El-Omar, Fatima El-Assaad, Freda Passam and Lislaine Wensing have re-initiated regular research seminars. These have now run for several months, second weekly at lunchtime on Thursdays. We have been treated to excellent presentations, strong audience numbers and engagement and questioning. Please keep your eyes peeled for the notices for these sessions, which are posted widely around the hospitals and emailed to all of you (probably repeatedly: sorry!); attend as many of them as you can. There are few things more inspiring for our more junior researchers than a healthy audience, and I'm sure you'll be pleasantly surprised by the breadth and strength of local research. These sessions are a welcome and detailed supplement to the translational research presentations held six times through the year at Medical Grand Rounds.

My thanks to everybody who continues to assist with the clinical education of our undergraduate medical students. Joanna, Justin and Wendy in the Clinical Teaching Units do a sterling job of coordination but their job is made so much easier by the enthusiasm of our teachers. They will soon be approaching you for assistance with the year six clinical exams – as always, your support for all clinical exams is critical and gratefully received.

Finally, a couple of events to keep on your radar:
- St George and Sutherland Clinical School Conjoint reception/buffet, date TBA but a Thursday evening in September!
- St George and Sutherland Medical Research Symposium, Thursday October 13.

As always, all of us in the Clinical School are happy to be contacted with ideas, questions and concerns. I hope you can find something valuable to consume in coming pages.

Michael Grimm, Clinical Associate Dean
Update on Teaching, Clinical Teaching Unit

Year 1 medical students have commenced their hospital sessions at St George. A group of year 1 students have visited the wards, some for the first time accompanied by a GP tutor to learn the skills of history taking and patient communication. Phase 2 students are settled in their clinical activities across various departments.

With the purchase of medical teaching equipment last year, we are now able to hold a number of clinical skills sessions aimed at improving the clinical skills of our year 3 to 6 students. These include venepuncture skills, insertion of nasogastric, catheterisation, airway management and suturing sessions. The response from the students has been positive and with the support of our teachers we look forward to continuing these sessions in the future.

Staff and students at Sutherland hospital have seen great progress to the $62.9 million redevelopment. Works include a newly expanded emergency department with 44 treatment bays including 3 resuscitation bays. Other improvements include 60 new acute inpatient beds (including 6 high dependency/intensive care beds) and storage space for theatres.

The redevelopment will provide increased and state of the art facilities, which will provide enhanced learning opportunities for students attached to the Sutherland Clinical Teaching Unit.

CONJOINTS NEEDED TO ASSIST IN THE PHASE 3 (YEAR 6) MEDICAL EXAMS:

St George Hospital:
Dates – 14, 15, 20 and 27 September – contact Joanna Tjoatmodjo djuniah@unsw.edu.au

Sutherland Hospital:
Dates – 15, 20 & 29 September contact Justin Joynes joynes@unsw.edu.au

Joanna and Justin, Student Administrative Officers

Postgraduate Update

Congratulations to Uphar Chamoli who has been awarded his PhD since our last newsletter. Well done Uphar! (Uphar along with his supervisor Dr Ashish Diwan and Co-supervisor Dr Naomi Tsafnat from the School of Engineering).
At the recent Faculty of Medicine Graduation ceremony 5 of our PhD Scholars received their degrees. Including Dr Chamoli, there were Dr Nancy Chang and Dr Kevin Ni (Supervisor Conjoint A/Prof Yong Li), Dr Annie Luo (Supervisor Prof Michael Grimm) and Dr Lubna Noorani (Supervisor Prof Martina Stenzel and Prof David Morris).

Left to Right: Dr Ashish Diwan, Postgraduate Coordinator, Dr Uphar Chamoli, Dr Nancy Chang and Dr Kevin Ni
The St George & Sutherland Clinical School Postgraduate Student Program has 27 enrolled students, with a further 2 student applications for semester 2, 2016 being assessed for PhD candidature. Of our 27 students 15 are enrolled PhD and 12 are enrolled Masters.

We have completed the first round of our Postgraduate Annual Reviews and will soon be scheduling the second round in September/October. Students are reminded to ensure that either their supervisor or co-supervisors are available to attend the reviews.

In case you missed the latest Graduate Research School newsletter here is the link. [https://research.unsw.edu.au/graduate-research-student-news](https://research.unsw.edu.au/graduate-research-student-news)

Remember the Inter Faculty Final 3 Minute Thesis competition is on:
8 September 2016, 4:30pm to 7:30pm

Ashish Diwan, Postgraduate Co-ordinator

Research In Progress Meetings

Launched in April this year, the new St George and Sutherland Clinical School Research in Progress Meetings (RIPM) have been an exciting and important addition to our Clinical School. These meetings have enabled a platform to present the interdisciplinary clinical and bench research currently being undertaken at St George Hospital and within the school. They have provided an opportunity for our researchers, clinicians and students to emerge from their silos and present their work enabling cross-pollination of ideas and formation of collaborations.

Instrumental to its conception and launch has been incoming chair of Medicine Prof Emad El-Omar and Head of School Prof Michael Grimm together with Dr Fatima El-Assaad, Dr Lislainne Wensing, Dr Freda Passam and Ms Maxi Ghelani. We are heading toward our eighth RIPM to date and have received an overwhelmingly enthusiastic response to our tantalisingly brimming program.

Each head of a research group within St George and Sutherland Clinical School has been invited to present an overview of their groups research interests followed by a presentation by a researcher within their group presenting on a specific project. This format has been used to get the ball rolling but in no way is it concrete. We are open
to suggestions and are actively looking for potential invited speakers from outside the
school.

The meetings are usually held on Thursday, fortnightly, between 1 and 2 pm and a
scrumptious lunch provided for attendees. So peel away from the ward, operating
theatre, clinic, laboratory or office and join us!

Past invited presenters included Prof Steven Krilis and Dr Shangwen Dong who
presented exciting new findings on the pathogenesis of the antiphospholipid
syndrome and biology of the protein beta-2 glycoprotein I in metabolism. Prof George
Murrell and Dr Hannah Lui presented new approaches in the management of
shoulder injury, A/Prof Judie Walton provided insight into the role of dietary aluminium
in Alzheimer’s disease, Dr Ashish Diwan presented his research into spine pathology
and Hayden Robinson presented on rotator cuff retear.

Prof Richard Stevens, a visiting Professor from Harvard University and his visiting
postdoctoral fellow Dr Lislaine Wensing gave a fascinating talk on the role of mast
cells in human diseases and in particular kidney disease. Prof David Morris and Dr
Farnaz Bahrami gave an engaging talk on their cancer research and potential new
therapies whilst Prof Yong Li and Dr Julia Beretov provided the latest developments
from research in cancer biomarkers. We were honoured to host prominent
researchers from the Marie Bashir Institute and University of Sydney Prof Georges
Grau and Dr Amy Cohen who presented their research in vascular biology and
malaria.

The next one for your diary is Prof Beng Chong and Dr Jose Perdomo from the
department of Medicine and Haematology on the 4 August followed by Prof John
Myburgh and Dr Manoj Saxena from Intensive Care Medicine on the 18 August. Look
out for the posters for more information or email f.el-assaad@unsw.edu.au to
subscribe to the mailing list. See you there!
Left to Right: Dr Freda Passam, Dr Lislaine Wensing, Prof Richard Stevens, Prof Michael Grimm and Dr Fatima El-Assaad

Fatima El-Assaad, Lislaine Wensing, Freda Passam, Research In Progress Committee Members

New Conjoint Appointments

Conjoint Lecturer
Dr Ching Yee Goh, Dr Murali Krishnaraj, Dr Penelope MacKenzie, Dr Kirsty Short.

Conjoint Associate Lecturer
Dr Andrej Bece, Dr Jenny Chen, Dr Peter Chen, Dr Peter Flint, Dr Hussein Hussein, Dr Philopatir Mikhail, Dr Xin Hui Ong, Dr Abhiskeik Prashar.

St George & Sutherland Medical Research Foundation

SSMRF welcomes $4 million funding from the Federal Government.

St George and Sutherland Medical Research Foundation (SSMRF) is set to receive $4 million from the Federal Government – a decision that the Foundation says will lift the ambitions of medical research in our region.

SSMRF Chief Executive Peter Christopher said the $4 million capital commitment will assist in our mission to support life-saving and life-changing medical research, for which we continue to raise funds. We have top researchers in our hospitals – research attracts and retains the best doctors and nurses. This next phase of the Foundation’s growth will mean more jobs, growth and innovation.

This year, the Foundation attracted world-renowned researchers to St George and Sutherland Clinical School. Harvard Professor Richard Stevens and scientist Lislaine Wensing, who is on a fellowship grant from Brazil, are looking into inflammatory diseases. Dr Wensing has a PhD in physiology and is a postdoctoral research fellow of immunology. She is working with Professor Stevens, an internationally recognised leader in the mast cell field, focusing on kidney disease. His research has been instrumental in the understanding of the beneficial roles of mast cells in blood coagulation and innate immunity. He has also researched the cell’s detrimental roles in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma, inflammatory bowel disease, arthritis and allergic inflammation.

The Foundation is also supporting Professor John Myburgh’s international research into brain injury.

Foundation chairman John Edmonds said the Federal Government’s $4 million is a substantial and timely boost, as the Foundation embarks on a major fundraising campaign. He said organisations including St George Bank, Tynan Motors, Optus, Ramsay Healthcare & UNSW are involved with the Foundation.
“We want to attract more of the best researchers to the region because we know that medical research saves lives and improves lives,” Professor Edmonds said.

“The region’s hospitals deserve the best, and the Foundation is determined to make sure that happens.”

If you would like to support the Foundation or find out more about SSMRF upcoming events go to ssmrf.com.au

Virginia Venckus, Executive Director

Work Health & Safety

The St George & Sutherland Clinical School level 3 committee is required to re-elect its members after every two years. The election is due and all research groups are requested to nominate a representative for the committee. Any current members who wish to remain as a committee member can do so. Please send any nominations to j.akhter@unsw.edu.au

The Electrical Testing and Tagging of all UNSW electrical items will commence from 25 July 2016. All electrical appliances whether in use or not must be certified, please make them available for the electrician, Ishrat to test.

A WHS audit will take place in October 2016. External auditors will verify the WHS management implementation at the research laboratories on level 3 of the Research & Education Centre. All staff are requested to assist the WHS Committee members for the preparation of this audit.

Javed Akhter, WH&S Chairperson