

RESEARCH NEWSLETTER

September 2010

Office of Medical Research, UNSW Medicine

2010 NSW SCIENTIST OF THE YEAR IN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

It is with great pleasure that I congratulate Professor Perminder Sachdev as the Winner of the 2010 NSW Scientist of the Year in the **Biomedical Sciences** category. Dr Perminder Sachdev is Professor of Neuropsychiatry at UNSW, Director of the Neuropsychiatric Institute at the Prince of Wales Hospital and Scientia Professor. He has published over 250 papers in international journals.

Professor Sachdev's research is in the areas of vascular dementia, Alzheimer's disease, dementia of Lewy body type and other dementias, Neuropsychiatric aspects of dementia and treatment of various neurological conditions.



The NSW Scientist of the Year Awards were established in 2008 by the NSW Office for Science and Medical Research (OSMR), to recognise and reward the State's leading researchers for cutting edge work that generates economic, health, environmental or technological benefits for NSW.

Please join me in *congratulating Professor Sachdev* for this prestigious acknowledgement of the great work he is doing.

I would also like to congratulate Professor Matthew Kiernan who was a finalist in the 2010 NSW Scientist of the Year Biomedical Sciences category. I am enormously proud of UNSW's achievements in the area of medical research and to have two such outstanding scientists as finalists for this prestigious award. This gives testimony to the high standard of research conducted in UNSW Medicine.

Peter Smith
Dean, UNSW Medicine

POST-DOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOWS - HOT TOPIC AT ACADEMIC BOARD!

In recognition of the significant contribution made by post-doctoral research fellows, this was the subject of a "hot topic" discussed at a recent meeting of the Academic Board. Professor Margaret Harding, Pro Vice Chancellor (Research) led an enthusiastic discussion about how UNSW should endeavour to improve the experience of post-doctoral fellows and how to assist them with their career and research development. A Research Fellow Advisory Committee will be appointed to provide advice to the PVC (Research) in developing University guidelines for the support of research fellows. In addition, a Post-doctoral Research Fellow Handbook is under development.

The results of the recent UNSW Research Fellow survey were presented to the Academic Board highlighting significant issues faced by research fellows during their time at UNSW. A number of very positive and helpful suggestions were proposed by research fellows as part of this survey. As a result of similar surveys and focus groups conducted by Medicine, the Faculty has been working on three major projects with regard to post-doctoral research fellows and their careers. These projects include the development of the post-doctoral fellows Advisory Committee which I will chair, development of a "Pathways" document to help facilitate career development and a skills development course and networking meeting will be introduced in 2011. Research fellows are now encouraged to participate in the Professional Development and Talent Management program which should help with career planning. I would welcome suggestions for how we could further improve facilities and support for our postdoctoral research fellows.

Denis Wakefield
Associate Dean Research

UNSW OPEN DAY

Saturday 4th September was UNSW's Open Day and to mark the occasion, UNSW Medicine hosted a Family Fun Morning for Alumni and Friends in the Michael Birt Gardens. Despite the wet and windy weather, it was cosy and dry in the marquee and children enjoyed the face-painting, balloon making, gingerbread men decorating, treasure hunt, parachute games, dancing and magic. Vekram, the President of Medsoc, kindly gave up his morning to plaster arms and talk to current and future potential students of UNSW Medicine.

Mr Patrick de Permentier, Professor Gary Housley, Dr Pierre Dilda and Mr Tim Ganderton were on hand to conduct tours of the Wallace Wurth and Lowy Cancer Research Centre. While guests mingled over tea and coffee in the marquee they perused photos and yearbooks of the first 25 years intake of Medical Students.

The fun, informal, networking event marked the commencement of an active project of reconnecting with UNSW Medicine Alumni. Ten thousand letters were recently sent to all Medicine Alumni requesting that they reconnect with the University by updating their current contact details and their research, industry and social interests on line at www.stayconnected.unsw.edu.au.

Erica Ford, Alumni & Events Officer, Faculty of Medicine



New Appointment – Director of Animal Care



Welcome to **Dr Josephine Joya**, who has recently joined the Faculty as Director of Animal Care. Josephine obtained her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from the University of the Philippines and did post-graduate studies in Veterinary Pathology at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universitaat Munchen, [Germany](#) and Enteropathogenic Microbiology at Osaka University, Japan. Josephine moved to Australia in 1988 and worked as a Senior Research Officer at the Muscle Development Unit of the Children's Medical Research Institute, Westmead, NSW. She has more than 20 years experience in the development of muscle-specific transgenic mouse models which includes mouse embryo [manipulations](#), phenotype characterisation, mouse embryo and sperm cryopreservation. Josephine also established surgical manipulations of skeletal muscles including stem cell transplantation, and was also involved in the generation and characterization of mouse models for human disease which included the trialling of potential therapies. The [primary roles](#) of the Director of Animal Care are to [facilitate](#) animal-based research at UNSW through training and education and to ensure compliance with the Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes. Josephine can be contacted on 9385 9912 ([Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesday mornings](#)) or 0466-778-752 or email j.joya@unsw.edu.au and is based on Level 3 South Wing Rupert Myers Building.

UNSW Inventor of the Year Awards 2010



The 2nd annual UNSW Inventor of the Year (IoY) Awards ceremony took place on Thursday, 2 September.

The 2010 UNSW Inventor Awards carried a total cash purse of \$28,000 amongst 5 major categories (Environment, Science and Engineering, Information & Communication Technology, Biomedicine, and the newly instituted Student Inventor of the Year), as well as Best New Invention by Staff, and Best New Invention by a Student. The awards recognise inventors that are making the world a better place. The awards are open to UNSW academics and students who are commercialising their research with NewSouth Innovations.

One hundred and forty leaders from business, media and research organisations celebrated the awards evening held at UNSW's John Niland Scientia Building. UNSW Vice-Chancellor Professor Fred Hilmer and NSW Chief Scientist and Chief Engineer Professor Mary O'Kane spoke at the gala event, which was emceed by Robyn Williams, host of ABC Radio National's The Science Show.

The Faculty of Medicine was well represented with 4 finalists:

Biomedicine Category

-**A/Prof Nick Di Girolamo** (from SoMS) for his invention (together with **Dr Stephanie Watson** from POWH) around a world first technique for restoring sight to sufferers of blinding corneal disease using stem cells.

-**Prof Levon Khachigian** (from the Centre for Vascular Research) for his invention around Dz13, a "molecular assassin", that targets and destroys a master gene (c-Jun) involved in diseases that cause a massive global burden of suffering and premature death.

Best New Invention by a Student

- **Sheau-Fang Ng** (from SoMS, Supervisor: Prof Margaret Morris) for her research around the identification of a set of novel biomarkers that could prevent the intergenerational transfer of metabolic conditions such as diabetes and obesity.
- **Edwin Lim** (from SoMS, Supervisors: Dr Gilles Guillemin and Prof Bruce Brew) for his research around new serum markers to assess disease Activity in Multiple Sclerosis progression.

Prof Levon Khachigian and **Sheau Fang Ng** won their respective categories.



Sheau-Fang Ng receiving her award from Mr Philip O'Sullivan, Managing Director of Callways Executive Selection (HR Recruiter)

Know and Use your IT resources!

The role of your Faculty IT team has been changing. With the move to campus-wide IT shared services (file, print, email and desktop support) the Faculty IT team will be moving to spend more time supporting specialist Research and Teaching activities. In Medicine, the transition work is ongoing. Email is complete, desktops are moving to the SOE where possible and shared File is just starting. So we are still mid-metamorphosis and somewhat cocooned with work but look for the slightly battered butterfly early next year.

Even during this ongoing transition however, my team and I are available to provide IT advice for Faculty of Medicine Research projects and activities so please use this IT resource. In fact, the more I know about your projects the better we will be able to target our activities and be a useful resource for the Faculty.

Our team already looks after a number of server-based applications for Faculty research projects and we provide additional specialist support for research computers in labs. We are also often called in to help with the IT components of budgets for research applications and, when involved early in the process, we can even help with advice on how to better use information technology resources within those projects. We can also help in managing the relationship with other IT resources either within the University, commercial IT providers or hospital IT groups. Feel free to use us for a second opinion or come to us first and we can let you know if we can help you.

Lastly, if you are having any problems with IT issues not being promptly resolved or don't know who to contact to yell at then we can often be a useful first point of contact. If it is a problem with your email or you need SPSS installed, then you should probably just "log a call". But if you are not getting your call sorted or you would like to build a 100 node computational cluster or host an SQL database or simply need a couple of terabytes of storage then please contact me directly.

When we are not busy with helping people move buildings, planning new buildings or figuring out why we need to keep adding network ports into buildings we also try to work on other large scale "plumbing" projects like improving fibre network links from the Uni into hospitals and providing better access to large scale (computer file) storage for research projects.

The current Medicine IT team is: Luc Betbeder (Manager), Clayton Gilbert, Sami Korell, Alan Louie, Renee Russell, Jake Surman, and Taeho Yoo



Professional Development & Talent Management (PDTM) Program 2010

The Professional Development & Talent Management (PDTM) Program for 2010 has now closed. Thank you to all our postdoctoral staff who participated, I am sure you found the experience rewarding.

Please remember: To be eligible to apply for a Postdoctoral Grant you must have participated in the PDTM Program.

With our growing postdoctoral community now reaching over 140 staff an Advisory Committee is being formed. Please contact Karen Walker (k.walker@unsw.edu.au) if you are interested in participating. Further information will be included in next month's newsletter.

Editor-in-Chief, Pancreatology



Congratulations to Professor Minoti Apte, Faculty Presiding Member, Director, Pancreatic Research Group, South Western Sydney Clinical School who has recently been appointed as Editor-in-Chief of Pancreatology, one of two major specialist journals in the field of pancreatic studies. Her selection for this position (after a competitive round of interviews) reflects her international standing in pancreatic research. She is acknowledged as a leader in the field of alcohol-induced pancreatic injury and pancreatic fibrogenesis, particularly the biology of pancreatic stellate cells.

Dean's Awards 2010

Nominations are now requested for the Dean's Awards for 2010. The categories are:

Dean's Award: To acknowledge and salute outstanding achievements by academic staff in the Faculty of Medicine

Dean's List: To acknowledge the achievements of undergraduate and postgraduate students in the Faculty of Medicine who have made a significant contribution to teaching, research or community activity.

Dean's Rising Star Award: To acknowledge achievements of post doctoral and early career scientists within the Faculty of Medicine who have made significant contributions to research.

There are three new categories:

Dean's Award for Professional and Technical Staff: To acknowledge achievements of professional and technical staff in the Faculty of Medicine who have made a significant contribution to the Faculty.

Dean's Award for Lifetime Achievement - Academic Staff: To acknowledge the lifetime achievements of Academic staff in the Faculty of Medicine who have made a significant contribution to the Faculty.

Dean's Award for Lifetime Achievement – Professional and Technical Staff: To acknowledge the lifetime achievements of Professional and Technical staff in the Faculty of Medicine who have made a significant contribution to the Faculty.

Policy documents and nomination forms are available at:

<http://www.med.unsw.edu.au/medweb.nsf/page/deansawards>

The closing date for nominations is **28 October 2010** - please complete the nomination form and send to Wendy Wartho at w.wartho@unsw.edu.au. At the beginning of November, nominations will be reviewed by an executive committee comprising the Senior Associate Dean, Associate Dean Research, Associate Dean of Teaching and the Presiding Member who will make appropriate recommendations to the Dean.

The Awards will be made at the end of November, date and venue to be announced in due course.

For any enquiries please contact Prof Denis Wakefield.

Major Equipment Grants 2011

Guidelines and application form are available under the Grants Management Office website at:

http://www.gmo.unsw.edu.au/ApplyingForFunds/InternalSchemes/InternalSchemes_index.html

Applications should be submitted electronically to Wendy Wartho (w.wartho@unsw.edu.au) in the Office of Medical Research by **Friday 15 October 2010**. **Applications received after this date will not be considered for funding**. Successful proposals will be announced within 2 weeks after the announcement of successful 2011 LIEF grants (late November).

Faculty Research Grants/Early Career Research Grants

Application forms and guidelines for Faculty research grants are now available on the Faculty of Medicine website:

<http://www.med.unsw.edu.au/medweb.nsf/page/researchne#rn3>

Applications should be sent electronically to Wendy Wartho at w.wartho@unsw.edu.au by **25 October 2010**. Enquiries should be directed to Prof Denis Wakefield on d.wakefield@unsw.edu.au or 9385 8210.

3 Minute Thesis Competition Winner!

Congratulations to Alex Jordan a PhD student from the Faculty of Science for his winning "Three Minute Thesis" on Why Males are not more Promiscuous. Alex was one of 23 UNSW research students from a range of disciplines who presented a three-minute "pitch" of their studies during the university-wide competition. He won \$3,000 in prize money and will now represent UNSW in the grand final of the [Australia and New Zealand 3MT Competition](#) at the University of Queensland.

The People's Choice winner was **Paul Lee** from the **Faculty of Medicine**, who spoke about 'brown fat', which might be the key to weight loss.

"The growth and activity of brown fat can be turned on," he says. "Brown fat has an important metabolic role in adult humans and is a potential treatment target for obesity." Paul also won \$1,500 for his presentation.

The inaugural event, hosted by UNSW's [Graduate Research School](#), was judged by Professor Cheryl Kernot, Professor Fred Watson and Dr Paul Willis.



Publication of the Month

Hongyan An, Vasudha Chandra, Barbara Piraino, Luis Borges, Carolyn Geczy, H. Patrick Mcneil, Katherine Bryant and Nicodemus Tedla, "Soluble LILRA3, a Potential Natural Antiinflammatory Protein, Is Increased in Patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis and Is Tightly Regulated by Interleukin 10, Tumor Necrosis Factor- α , and Interferon- γ ", *The Journal of Rheumatology* 2010 37:8; doi:10.3899/jrheum.091119. The impact factor of J Rheumatol is 3.854.

2011 ARC Linkage Projects, Round 2: Alert 1

LINKAGE TIMELINES

Please see below the relevant dates for 2011 ARC Linkage Projects, Round 2. Further details and information are available on the Faculty website:

<http://www.med.unsw.edu.au/medweb.nsf/page/researchne>

Date	Event
22 September	Proposals Open in RMS (Eligibility Exemption Requests Open 16 September 2010)
27 September	Eligibility Exemption Requests Submitted through RMS. All requests should be discussed with the RSO prior to this date. Please complete and "Office Submit" by this date. The Request will be checked for compliance and submitted by the GMO to the ARC by 5:00pm Wednesday 29 September.
27 September	Medical and Dental Research Certification UNSW will need to certify that your proposal is eligible (further details below).
20 October	Research Strategy Office/Faculty Support Submission of complete draft applications for RSO feedback due by this date. Send Word versions of your Parts C and E to James Walsh (j.walsh@unsw.edu.au) or Lee Williamson (lee.williamson@unsw.edu.au) or for Faculty of Science applicants, Prof Peter Baverstock (p.baverstock@unsw.edu.au). Early engagement is <u>strongly advised</u> .
3 November	GMO Compliance Checking – closing date for all applications Internal GMO deadline for receipt of applications for compliance checking. Please click "Submit proposal to research office" within RMS so your compliance checker can review your application. Details of your compliance checker will be advised shortly after you have commenced your application in RMS.
17 November	ARC Closing Date

20 October 2010 - ARC Linkage Grant 2011, Round 2, Information Session

Target Audience: All potential Round 2, 2011 applicants with a reasonably well developed application to hand are encouraged to attend.

Time: 11 am – 3 pm

Venue: John Goodsell Building, LG15 (Map Ref F20), Kensington Campus

For more information click [here](#).

CONTACT DETAILS: Please contact Wendy Wartho at w.wartho@unsw.edu.au or 9385 8210 with any news/information.