



TRANSPLANTATION SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

Annual Newsletter 2015

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Editorial Comment

Dear Members,

Welcome to the Annual TSANZ Newsletter for 2015!

The society has had a productive and stimulating year with another highly successful ASM, and several awards given out to members, junior trainees and scientists. Congratulations to Dan Chambers and Carolyn Clark the convenors for 2015. Dan and Carolyn were supported by SPEC and the speakers and the content of the meeting was once again of a very high quality. A special congratulatory note to Carolyn who missed the actual meeting due to the birth of her daughter Katie.

The postgraduate course for 2015 was organised by Allison Tong and Jeanette Villanueva. A stimulating program was held with excellent feedback.

The structure of the PGC and ASM changed in 2015 such that the PGC was held for 1.5 days (Sat-Sun midday) followed by the ASM commencing lunchtime Sunday. Feedback regarding this scheduling has been acknowledge. Other changes evident at the ASM 2015 was the Ian McKenzie Prize lecture given on day 1 which was applauded. Ending the ASM with "The Great Debate" also received welcomed feedback.

Congratulations to all the highly deserving award recipients, indicated later in this newsletter. In particular special mention must go to Angela Webster who received the prestigious Ian McKenzie award, which recognises outstanding contribution to transplantation. Angela is a deserved winner and we congratulate her on this award. Many junior members of the society also benefitted and the ongoing input of trainees, basic scientists and junior researchers in the scientific program is great to see.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter. We'll try to keep you up to date with events and meetings throughout the year.

Karen Dwyer

President's Message

Dear Membership,

It is with great pleasure that I write to you for the first time as President, on behalf of an energetic, new and enthusiastic Council. I would like to thank the outgoing President Geoff McCaughan for his leadership, Treasurer Hilton Gock for his fine management of TSANZ monetary affairs, Secretary John Kanellis for his tireless work and sage advice, Helen Pilmore for her energy and commitment

and Paul Robertson for his practicality and knowledge of organ donation. It is with much sadness that I must also farewell Aviva Rosenfeld who retired in August. I echo the wishes of all past Presidents and Councilors in acknowledging Aviva's enormous contribution to our Society, which Council has formally recognized with Life Membership. Aviva has been the backbone of our Society for many, many years, without whom successive Councils would have been adrift at sea. We will miss Aviva's commitment to our Society, her organizational ability, her discreet attention to detail and knowledge of protocol, her good humour and humanity. The best people ensure good succession, and in this regard Aviva has also excelled in her mentorship of Sommer Twycross who has fared superbly since Aviva's departure and is now joined part-time by Nicola. Though we are poorer for Aviva's departure, please be assured that the Society will remain well supported by our new team.

Council has taken the decision to rotate the venue for our Annual Scientific Meeting. Canberra has been home to our ASM for over 15 years. I would like to acknowledge the many successful Post-Grad Courses and ASMs that Canberra has staged, and in doing so thank the 2015 organizers Dan and Carolyn (ASM), Allison and (PGC) for designing and implementing two superb events. However, whilst Canberra has served us well, originally at the Academy of Science and more recently The Manning Clark Centre, a combination of feedback from the Membership, slowly declining attendances, a need for new dinner venues and problems with the weather (particularly for those hardy souls who took on the "fun run" at -5⁰C this year!) have prompted Council to move. Furthermore, the original rationale for Canberra as being equally accessible and affordable to all is no longer a reality. Our current proposal is to rotate between major cities on the East coast of Australia, starting with Sydney. Our rationale is that interesting and affordable venues are available for meetings of our size, nearby accommodation is available at prices similar to Canberra, and the East coast cities are a single flight away from most cities of ANZ. We are confident you will be impressed and stimulated at this year's ASM, to be held April 10-12 at the Aerial Function Centre, University of Technology, Sydney. This venue is comfortable and well appointed, with

plenty of outdoor and indoor areas to meet and chat. Located at on the Western edge of the CBD, within the "University" district, access by car or public transport is easy and the area is well served by affordable hotels, cafes, restaurants and funky bars. We will host our usual Post-Grad education course immediately prior to the ASM on April 8-9, and will follow the ASM with two new events on Wednesday April 13, a combined TSANZ-AOTA workshop on Organ Donation and in parallel an educational meeting co-hosted with the ANZSN: A Transplant Update for Clinicians. We hope the excitement of a new venue and a dynamic programme, featuring prominent local and international speakers, will make for a re-invigorated and exciting ASM.

The joint **TSANZ-TTS Basic Science Symposium** is fast approaching. To be held November 11-13 in Lorne, Victoria, this meeting provides the opportunity for our trainees and members interested in the basic science of transplantation to hear and meet with international and local experts. Our local organizers, Shane Grey and Stephen Alexander, have worked with colleagues at TTS and are to be congratulated on designing an exciting programme at the cutting edge of our field. TSANZ have supported the meeting financially with particular focus on supporting the attendance of our trainees. We encourage you all to attend and take in the science, fellowship and the ambience of Lorne.

Organ donation performance remains a focus across the country. TSANZ remains actively engaged with key stakeholders and the ongoing improvements in donor rates are pleasing to see. TSANZ continues to provide advice to the Australian Organ and Tissue Authority (AOTA) through the Transplant Liaison Group and Council is strongly supportive of the advances AOTA have led in promoting organ donation and bringing the donation and transplantation sectors together. The planned TSANZ/AOTA organ donation workshop, AOTAs support for TSANZ in producing the Clinical Guidelines, our collaboration with AOTA and NHMRC in producing the NHMRC Ethical Guidelines on Transplantation of Organs from Deceased Donors, input into the Vigilance and Surveillance Framework and other related projects strongly attest to an ongoing, productive relationship.

This is an exciting time in our dynamic field of transplantation. We look forward to representing your interests, working with you and providing you with quality meetings over the next 2 years of our Council. We welcome your input, feedback and support.

Steve Chadban
President, TSANZ

Secretary's Report

A changing of the guard has occurred on TSANZ council (no late night factional discourse rest assured) with Steve Chadban taking on the role of President; Steve Alexander President-elect and Rob Carroll as Treasurer. A distinguished team.... Our gratitude to departing executive Geoff McCaughan (Pres), John Kanellis (Sec) and Hilton Gock (Treasurer) who left council in a robust position. I would encourage everyone to consider contributing to TSANZ council as positions arise with a specific shout-out to the women of the society in an attempt to improve the current gender imbalance.

We currently have 610 active TSANZ members and remind you to encourage junior colleagues to join the society. The benefits to the individual are many including access to travel grants, application for awards, reduced registration rates for attendance at ASM and PGC and most importantly networking with colleagues at such events. The TSANZ website outlines the many generous grants and awards offered by the society for young as well as established researchers, as well as trainees and clinicians.

The society continues in its efforts to actively promote basic scientific research as well as be involved in clinical developments in organ transplantation. The awards to younger members remain an important focus and every effort is being made to maintain and enhance these opportunities for our up and coming scientific and clinical members. The awardees from the ASM 2015 are highlighted in this newsletter.

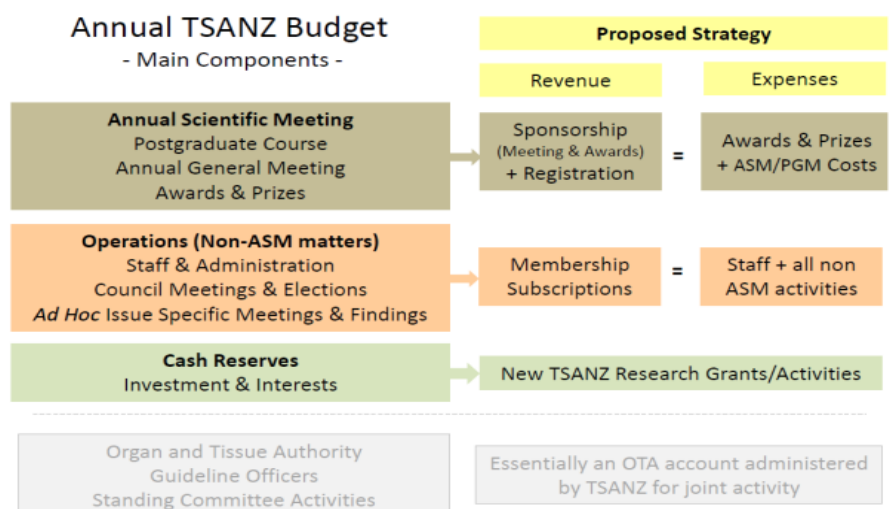
There are several meetings throughout the year, which may be of interest to society members. The main ones to note for the near future are outlined near the end of this newsletter.

I hope to see many of you throughout the year at an event or meeting. Please feel free contact me if you any comments or questions related to the society's activities.

Karen Dwyer
Honorary Secretary, TSANZ

Treasurer's Report

The Society remains in a stable financial position in the medium term with approximately \$1m in savings and \$300-400K for all operations. Generating any substantive income on these investments it will become difficult due to record low interest rates and increased and more importantly sustained volatility in the share market.



Over the last 5 years we have operated at a loss of around \$40,000 and for the first time we made a profit of \$85,000 in the 2014 financial year. However this profit must be seen the context of recent losses and falls in investment returns.

I am pleased to report we were in the black for the 2014 ASM and PGC course. The total expenses of the event was \$268,540 whist registration revenue brought in \$133,227 with sponsorship making up the difference.

In 2015 there have been some differences in the structure of the PGC and ASM – with the ASM

being \$239,459 but registration only \$102,813 with similar sponsorship support at 2014 levels.

There will be some minor restructuring of the Societies Investment Funds from November 2015 to make management of a variety of investment funds less complex but the overall structure of the funds will remain similar to previous years.

Although we all are aware of Aviva's fantastic work over many years of service – we also should be mindful of her work to maintain Society's financial stability.

Rob Carroll
Treasurer, TSANZ

Advisory Committees & Working Groups

There has been great progress on the Committees and Working group front, admirably assisted by Iman Ali our tireless senior project officer.

All the advisory committees and the working groups met during the 2015 ASM in Canberra as planned. Two new Chairs were elected, with Tanya McWilliams and Josh Kausman now carrying the mantle for the Lung AC and the Paediatric Working Group respectively. The tenure of Henry Pleass, Chair of the Pancreas and Islet AC, was extended for another 2-year term by the Committee. The contributions of the outgoing Chairs, Peter Hopkins and Winita Hardikar are acknowledged, and indeed appreciated. With the maturing of the TSANZ Advisory Committees the selection of committee members and chairs is being made more transparent and inclusive: vacant positions are notified more widely across hospitals in all the jurisdictions accompanied by a job description.

TSANZ Council at its 22 September 2015 meeting re-designated the Tolerance Working Group as an advisory committee, reflecting its ability to function more formally at the advisory level with the aim of improving the efficacy of the organ transplantation therapy.

In the June meetings, the Lung and Cardiac ACs presented their annual audit of urgent listing as did Pancreas and Islet and LITAC ACs in respect to allocation of organs. DSDC AC plans to resume its annual audit of organ retrieval utilizing the national ORRF.

The drafting of the *TSANZ Clinical Guidelines* has progressed, with all the advisory committees producing drafts pertaining to their areas of practice. Sarah White, the consultant who is project managing this work, completed the consultation draft which has been sent to a selected number of organizations for commenting. The consultation period finishes on 6 October 2015; the *TSANZ Clinical Guidelines* is expected to be released in February 2016.

Steve Alexander
(with help from Iman Ali)

SPEC Report

The ASM 2015 was held in Canberra in June, the last time this will be the default site for the TSANZ ASM. Congratulations to Dan Chambers, Carolyn Clark and SPEC for putting together an exceptional meeting highlighting the "rise of the machines". The format of the meeting was changed starting at noon on Sunday and finishing Tuesday afternoon. Although this change was not embraced by all it will continue in 2016, however a change of venue from Canberra to Sydney may alleviate to some extent the issues associated with getting to Canberra by Sunday midday. The change in scheduling saw the program open with the Ian McKenzie Prize giving due recognition to both Ian and the recipient of this prestigious award. The ASM closed with "The Great Debate". Here we saw Simon Robson, toga and all, with Ashley Irish tackle the duo of Geoff Hill and Greg Snell (aka Brutus). I think most will agree this was a great finish to what was a terrific meeting.

The ASM 2016 will be held in April (10th-12th) at UTS Sydney and is being convened by Min Hu and Andrew Jabbour with the backing of SPEC. Andrew has been instrumental in facilitating the move to Sydney and by all accounts the venue will be spectacular. They have been busy working on the program and

have secured international speakers of great esteem including Dorry Segev, Gabriel Oniscu, Alberto Sanchez-Fueyo, Avi Shaked and Jack Lake. The ASM dinner will be held in the Great Hall, Sydney University Monday 11th April, 2016. Please note with the ASM being held earlier in the year that abstract submissions will open on the 1st of November 2015 and close on the 4th of December 2015.

The PGC course for 2015 was convened by Allison Tong and Jeanette Villanueva and received excellent feedback. Darren Lee and Lucy Sullivan have been working on the 2016 program and hope to provide a mix of basic and clinical science covering all transplant areas.....should be able to do in 1.5 days! The PGC will run from Sat 9th April to Sunday 10th April and be followed immediately by the ASM.

There are additional meetings being organised outside the auspice of SPEC including the Donate Life Forum, Paired Kidney Exchange meeting and Transplant update for the non-transplanting physician.

I would be happy to receive any comments, suggestions or feedback from members for consideration by SPEC.

Karen Dwyer
Chair of Spec

TSANZ Annual Dinner
@ The War Memorial, Canberra ACT
Monday 22nd June 2015



The 2015 International ASM speakers Prof. Peter Friend, Prof. Marcel van den Brink, Prof. Robert Gaston and Prof. Simon Robson with TSANZ President Prof. Geoff McCaughan



President's Prize winners Chris Hope (Clinical) and Nathan Zammit (Basic Sci) with TSANZ President Prof. Geoff McCaughan



KHA Award (Clinical) winner Dr Germaine Wong with incoming TSANZ President Prof. Steve Chadban, KHA Award winner (Laboratory) Ms Jamie Brady & TSANZ President Prof. Geoff McCaughan



Ian McKenzie Prize for Outstanding Contribution in Transplantation winner Dr Angela Webster with TSANZ President Prof. Geoff McCaughan



Mr Chris Thomas of Transplant Australia with the Mark Cocks Tx Research Scholarship winner Dr Rob Carroll with TSANZ President Prof. Geoff McCaughan



TSANZ President Prof. Geoff McCaughan with the Basic Science Young Investigator Award Winners



TSANZ President Prof. Geoff McCaughan with the Clinical Science Young Investigator Award Winners

PRIZES AWARDED IN 2015

President's Prize (Basic Science)

Nathan Zammit

President's Prize (Clinical)

Chris Hope

Ian McKenzie Prize

Angela Webster

Mark Cock Tx Research Scholarship

Rob Carroll

KHA Award (Clinical)

Germaine Wong

KHA Award (Laboratory)

Jamie Brady

YIA Novartis

Anjan Kumar Bongoni, Hong Chee Chew, Kevin Chow, Nicholas Geraghty, David Liuwantara, Suzanna Pilgrim, Peter Rose, Kisha Sivanathan, Laetitia Le Texier, Nathan Zammit

YIA TSANZ

Madeleine Didsbury, Hung Do Nguyen, Jenny Chen, Yi Vee Chew, Anna Francis, Chris Hope, Carlo Pulitano, Sharmila Ramessur, Ankit Sharma, Karen Waller

Membership

Since the last newsletter, Council welcomed the following new members:-

TSANZ

Soheil Afshar, Anjan Kumar Bongoni, Megan Brown, Jacob Cao, Jenny Chen, Hong Chee Chew, Yi Vee Chew, Timothy Coughlan, Namita Sonam Deo, Madeline Didsbury, Anna Francis, Nicholas Geraghty, Emily Granger, Fei Guo, Andrea Henden, Peter Hollett, Dandan Huang, Nathan Jamieson, Julie Jaw, Kushani Jayasinghe, Patrick Kelly, Christina Lai, Khai Gene Leong, Hui Liew, Usman Mahmood, Momena Manzoor, Saw Yu Mon, Alex Peng, Peter Rose, David Skalicky, Sebastian Stead, Lucy Sullivan, Grace Tague, Caroline Tallis, Yixiong Tan, James Tang, Laetitia Le Texier, Karen Trotter, Karen Waller, Susan Wan, Beata Zahorowska, Yuanfei Zhao

ATCA/TSANZ

Aimee Henriksen, Angela Smith, Shakira Spiller

TNA/TSANZ

Karen Trotter, Angela Vago

RESIGNATIONS

Since the last newsletter, Council has accepted the following resignations:

Volker Benseler, Michael Chu, John Collins, Namita Deo, Shaun Flint, Dario Gerace, Leny Hidayati, Alex Hodgkinson, Jenna Maree Iwasenko, Yik-Wen Loh, John Males, Annabel Martin, Edward Meagher, David Munster, Niroj Obeyesekere, Peta Phillips, Julian Smith, Giles Walters, Zuopeng Wu

Society Awards and Grants

The Society provides a number of benefits for members, which include support to attend national and international transplantation meetings and reduced fees at meetings sponsored by the society. The eligibility criteria for each award are outlined on the TSANZ website.

Travel Grant Award Reports

American Transplant Congress

2nd - 6th May, 2015

Philadelphia, USA

Huiling Wu

I would like to thank the TSANZ for supporting my travel to Philadelphia for American Transplant Congress 2015. This was a great opportunity for me to learn more about “cutting edge” research in transplantation.

The meeting program was extensive, and covered a broad range of topics in transplantation, both scientific and clinical aspects. In the basic science session, the roles of innate immunity, in particular, new insights into effects of toll like receptors and the complex functionality of macrophages in transplant rejection and tolerance, microbiome and immunity in the regulation of transplantation outcome, targeting allo-reactive T and B cells and new cell therapeutics in transplantation, and new technical advance such as Crisper genomic editing for transplant research were of particular interest for my current research.

Our projects involve targeting innate immunity in kidney ischemia reperfusion injury and allograft rejection. This conference gave our group the opportunity to present our work entitled “IL-17 deficiency attenuates allograft injury and prolongs survival in a murine model of fully MHC-mismatched renal allograft transplantation” in the session of Innate Immune Mechanisms in acute allograft rejection, which was one of several sessions looking at the role of innate immunity in transplantation.

Attendance at this conference has hugely improved my knowledge of transplant immunology. Once again, I would like to thank the TSANZ for their support.

Tony Kwan

I would like to thank the TSANZ committee for providing me with a travel grant to attend the American Transplant Congress 2015, held at the Philadelphia Convention Centre from 2nd to 6th May this year. The conference was an excellent forum bringing scientists, clinicians, allied health professionals and others in the transplantation field to share the findings of their research, as well as providing ample networking opportunities with colleagues on a global scale. As a city steeped in history, Philadelphia alone has over 60 recognized National Historic Landmarks. When I was not busy attending the various conference talks I found time taking in the picturesque views strolling along the Delaware River and educate myself on American colonial history.

A wide selection of symposia, workshops and presentation sessions were available, catering to the full spectrum of delegates’ interests attending the conference. As a PhD student interested in transplantation immunology I attended scientific sessions covering a diverse range of topics such as T and B cell biology, heterologous immunity, and mechanisms of ischemia-reperfusion injury. A particular interesting topic is the emerging role of gut microbiota and its role in the modulation of alloimmunity and graft tolerance.

The plenary sessions represent examples of pioneering research performed in the transplantation field. These include the differential role of PI3K subunits in the modulation of regulatory T cells, identification of novel biomarkers in assessing graft tolerance or rejection, development of a live donor profile score in the prediction of graft survival, and the derivation of pancreatic- β cells from induced pluripotent stem cells using a novel three-dimensional culture system. A highlight of these talks was Atul Butte’s presentation on the use of open-source data sets from the web. With the availability of the myriad raw data sets from registered clinical trials, he provided examples of how his research group was able to link and combine such data to answer novel research hypotheses that otherwise would have insufficient power in single trials. Another point of interest clinically was the findings of the

BENEFIT study on the use of belatacept being superior to cyclosporine in seven-year renal allograft survival.

I presented my poster “IL-17 deficiency attenuates renal allograft injury and prolongs survival in a murine transplantation model” on the third day of the conference. Perhaps due to the information-packed nature of the conference, delegate fatigue was starting to show. Although the session was sparsely-attended, I had very informative discussions with those interested in my poster.

The final day of the conference concluded with a “What’s hot and what’s new” session highlighting cutting edge research from both the basic science and clinical spheres. This had been a great learning experience and inspiration for future research directions. Once again I would like to thank TSANZ for this wonderful opportunity to attend.

Martin Howell

Thanks to the generous support of the TSANZ I attended the American Transplant Congress held in Philadelphia in May 2015. This was the first US congress I have attended and I found the diversity of topics to be particularly stimulating and of relevance to my research interests in patient reported outcomes, patient preferences and priorities, quality of life, and health economics. On the final day of the conference I presented an oral paper titled: “Adverse events of maintenance immunosuppression following kidney transplantation reported in randomised controlled trials: a systematic review”.

I attended daily sunrise symposia that covered a range of topics relevant to my research interests including issues around transplantation in teenagers, transitioning to adult care, economics of transplantation, best practices in living donation, and the influence of medication cost structures on patient care. During the daily oral and poster sessions I focussed on presentations and posters addressing the ethics of organ donation, economics of transplantation, disparity of access to transplantation, patient focussed topics such as non-adherence, maximising the organ donor pool through the use of extended criteria and high risk organs, and transplantation in the elderly. Away from the clinical and basic research, the theme that I consider best describes the congress is: maximising access to transplantation, through expansion of the deceased and living donor

pool, extending transplantation to the elderly, and addressing disparities of access.

However, a recurrent theme at a number of sessions I attended related to the commercial aspects of transplantation. For example, high risk and elderly/frail patients were described as commercial risks due to the higher costs of treatment after transplantation and the best margins for the private sector are to be obtained by maximising pre-emptive transplants from live donors. Of particular concern was a discussion of the influence that a patient’s insurance arrangements has in prescribing the ‘optimum’ drug regimen after transplantation. It was also evident that the growing disparity in access to transplantation between African Americans and white Americans is in part a consequence of increasing out of pocket costs for transplantation and donation, the costs of living donation and uncertainties of insurance after donation, and the lack of long-term access to affordable drugs.

I felt privileged to be able to attend the 2015 ATC which I found stimulating and insightful.

Hung Do Nguyen

Research presented:

1. Oral presentation: HLA Broad Antigen and Eplet Mismatches in determining the Risk of Acute Rejection After Kidney Transplantation
2. Poster presentation Comparative Survival Benefits and Costs of an Eplet and Broad Antigen Based Matching System in Deceased Donor Kidney Transplant Allocation Among Indigenous Australians

The American Transplant Congress is the joint meeting of the American Society of Transplant Surgeons (ASTS) and the American Society of Transplantation (AST) and was held in Philadelphia, USA in May, 2015. With rapid advances in transplantation research and medicine, attendance of this meeting allowed me the opportunity to maintain and improve my knowledge, competence and performance in the field.

The meeting began with the very informative pre-meeting presentations on medical care of the kidney transplant recipient. Topics covered included management of cardiovascular risk and malignancy in the kidney transplant recipient as well as current evidence for

management of BK virus and recurrent glomerulonephritis after kidney transplantation. The main scientific meeting was fantastic and included presentations covering a wide variety of topical areas. Highlights included presentations on the use of information technology in nephrology research, management of infectious complications in the kidney transplantation recipient and the utility of HLA epitope matching in kidney transplantation. In addition to the presentations at the plenary sessions, symposia, and concurrent sessions, the poster displays were full of interesting topics and presented in a format that allowed engaging discussions with their presenters from around the world. An additional benefit was the opportunity to meet other researchers in a similar field enabling discussion and sharing of ideas for future research directions.

I am extremely grateful to the TSANZ for the opportunity to attend and participate in this prestigious conference. I was able to present my research on epitope matching in renal transplantation to a large, international audience, which was well received and triggered interesting and thought-provoking discussion that has helped shaped the future directions of my research.

**The American Association of
Immunologists (AAI) 2015 Annual
Meeting
8th- 12th May 2015
New Orleans, USA**

Motoko Koyama

Immunology 2015, the Annual meeting of the American Association of Immunologists (AAI) was held in New Orleans, LA, USA from 8th to 12th May 2015 and I was fortunate to have the opportunity to present my research. I am deeply grateful for the support from TSANZ by awarding me the TSANZ Travel Grant to attend this meeting.

My research interests are in haematopoietic stem cell transplantation and I am investigating transplant immunology, particularly graft-versus-host disease (GVHD) and graft-versus-leukaemia/lymphoma (GVL) effects using

murine bone marrow transplantation (BMT) models. My oral presentation focused on the role of donor colonic dendritic cell subsets to exacerbate GVHD once it is initiated by host antigen presenting cells. My presentation was well-received and was followed by good discussion.

Unfortunately, several big lectures by prominent speakers were held concurrently which made it challenging for me to attend. Nonetheless, it was a highly intellectual conference covering experimental and translational immunology. Importantly, four rapidly-developing fields including next-generation sequencing, metabolomics, immunoregulatory roles of lymphatic endothelium and integration of neural and immune pathogen sensing were highlighted. In the field of experimental immunology, microscopy applications to study cell-to-cell contact or cell migrations were very impressive. Cancer immunotherapy and microbiota in immunity were also well-focused on in translational or clinical immunology. In transplant immunology, T cell modulation was the major topic and the multiple targets including IL-33/ST2 pathway, Rho-associated kinase 2 (ROCK2), Jak/STAT signalling or microbiota were presented as attractive therapeutic strategies to reduce organ rejection and graft-versus-host disease.

Overall, my attendance at Immunology 2015 gave me the opportunity to listen and gain particularly useful and current research in immunology and also to network with like-minded investigators in all fields. Overall and most importantly, it was delightful to engage with early career researchers like me from other laboratories all over the world. Thank you very much to TSANZ!!

**European Renal Association
European Dialysis and
Transplantation Assoc. Congress
28th- 31st May 2015
London, UK**

Doreen Fang

I would like to thank the TSANZ for awarding me a travel grant to attend the 52nd European Renal Association – European Dialysis and

Transplant Association (ERA-EDTA) congress held at the ExCel London Exhibition and Convention Centre from May 28th – 31st 2015. The scientific program offered many informative sessions covering a wide variety of topics related to general nephrology, dialysis and transplantation from basic science, translational from bench to bedside and vice versa, experimental, to clinical application.

The first day of the meeting was a dedicated day on topics of current interests relevant to Continuous Medical Education (CME) with updates on acute kidney injury, genetic and inherited kidney disorders, mineral and bone disorders in chronic kidney disease, diabetes and obesity and renal disease, renal stone disease, tolerance in transplantation, barrier for donation, and many more. The subsequent days were intense with many interesting concurrent sessions that were often difficult to choose which session to attend.

I was interested in current concepts regarding HLA and non-HLA antibodies, HLA-desensitization protocol and post-transplant donor specific antibodies (DSA). The presentation on non-HLA antibodies focused particularly on Angiotensin II type I receptor (AT1R). There have been studies demonstrating the role of AT1R in acute allograft rejection, including antibody-mediated rejection without DSA, and renal graft failure, suggesting pre-transplant AT1R antibodies are a novel and independent risk factor for acute rejection. Other non-HLA antibodies that were briefly mentioned include [anti-endothelial cell](#) and anti-vimentin antibodies. The presentation on HLA-desensitization discussed several local protocols which consist of plasmapheresis with IVIg +/- rituximab or bortezomib. IVIg alone seems less effective compared to IVIg plus rituximab. However, IVIg plus rituximab has limited efficacy in very highly sensitized transplants. Post-transplant DSA monitoring is important as a few studies have shown that development of DSA pre-dates graft failure by a few years and predicts worse prognosis. C1q binding may help distinguish pathogenic from non-pathogenic DSA. The suggested treatment comprised of IVIg with either plasmapheresis or rituximab.

I also attended a few presentations on treatment for glomerulonephritis(GN). B-cell targeting

therapy seemed to be the centre of attention. In primary or idiopathic membranous nephropathy (IMN), experimental results suggested that IgG antibodies play a key role in the pathogenesis of IMN. Therefore it was reasonable to postulate that suppression of antibody production by B-cell depletion may improve the pathology and lead to reduction in proteinuria. Although no head to head randomized-controlled trials which perhaps it is time for one, several groups reported Rituximab, a monoclonal antibody targeting CD20, to be of non-inferiority, has a safer side-effect profile, and was better tolerated. There was an advocate to recommend Rituximab as first line therapy for IMN. In minimal change disease (MCD) and focal segmental glomerulosclerosis (FSGS), it was suggested that Rituximab to be an efficacious steroid-sparing agent in steroid-dependent and multi-relapsing MCD and FSGS patients. The optimal Rituximab dosage is unclear at this stage. Again most data were derived from case series and retrospective studies, and prospective trials are essential. In lupus nephritis, a single-centre observational study reported encouraging result of >50% of patients achieving complete remission at 1 year when Rituximab was given as induction therapy and mycophenolate with no oral steroids as maintenance. This work has been taken forward in RITUXILUP trial, a large open-labelled multicentre randomized-controlled trial, which is estimated to complete in 2018. It was not all about B-cell therapy - there was a talk on IL-17 producing T-cells which has been implicated to play a key role in the development of renal injury in experimental crescentic GN.

I really enjoyed the session on late breaking clinical trials, in particular a presentation on a randomized clinical trial on 'Effect of remote ischemic pre-conditioning on kidney injury among high-risk patients undergoing cardiac surgery'. They showed promising results that ischemic preconditioning compared with no ischemic preconditioning significantly reduced the rate of acute kidney injury, use of renal replacement therapy, and intensive care unit stay. I thought this exciting result may also have an implication in protecting against ischemia-reperfusion injury, which is an inevitable event in transplantation and known risk factor for acute and chronic allograft dysfunction.

I had the opportunity to present my poster titled 'Follistatin, an activin-binding protein, attenuates renal ischemia-reperfusion injury in mice'. I was pleased to meet and share experience with researchers who came forward to discuss my poster.

On a personal note, London is a beautiful city that is rich in history and culture with many royal palaces, parks, galleries and museums to explore. All attractions are well-connected with an efficient transport network.

I would like to sincerely thank the TSANZ again for their generous support.

International Liver Transplantation Society **8th – 11th July 2015** **Chicago, USA**

Carlo Pulitano

I would like to thank the Transplantation Society of Australia and New Zealand for the provision of a travel grant to attend the 21st International Liver Transplantation Congress held in Chicago from July 8-11st 2015.

Along with my mentor Michael Crawford, I presented at the Rising Star Award session. Dr. Crawford gave a 4-minute presentation summarizing the background information relevant to the topic. I followed with my work titled "Randomized Clinical Study on Technique of Reperfusion in Liver Transplantation: Insight Into Microcirculation, Gene Response, and Outcome". I quite enjoyed the session, which allowed for a more in-depth discussion of my work. Furthermore, afterwards I had the opportunity to converse with experts in my field about the future direction of my research.

There were excellent educational opportunities for clinicians, scientists, and surgeons to learn cutting-edge advances in research and exchange ideas and practice in the field of liver transplantation. I was especially interested in the symposiums on stem cell techniques, bioengineering, and modulation of portal inflow, particularly the symposium on new biomarkers of rejection. It was exciting to hear about the early experience of Penn Transplant Institute and their use of miRNA, which may

have important clinical application in the near future.

Finally, my experience at ILTS was enhanced by the fact that it took place in the beautiful city of Chicago. I found Chicago to be a vibrant city and enjoyed exploring the city as well as seeing it from the water at the conference gala.

13th Congress of the International Society for Organ Donation and Procurement (ISODP) **17th – 20th October 2015** **Seoul, South Korea**

Camilla Hanson

I am grateful for the opportunity afforded to me by TSANZ to travel to Seoul, Korea, to attend the International Society of Organ Donation and Procurement in 2015. I was eager to attend this meeting to gain an international perspective on innovative strategies to increase transplantation rates, understand ethical and psychosocial considerations, and to further my knowledge and ideas for my research projects examining access to living kidney donor transplantation.

On the first day of the conference I presented our systematic review on the 'Motivations, challenges, and attitudes to self-management in kidney transplant recipients'. The opportunity to discuss my research in a large forum proved very worthwhile as the discussion generated questions and ideas that will influence my research. On the last day I presented our study on 'Nephrologists' perspectives on patient eligibility and access to living kidney donor transplantation'. This session was very thought-provoking, as I presented alongside other researchers who explored access to living kidney donor transplantation from different angles. Other talks considered factors associated with non-completion of the evaluation process and causes of exclusion during transplant and donor evaluations.

The extensive conference program exposed me to a diverse range of current issues in kidney transplantation, particularly issues in deceased donation. The sessions that left the greatest impression covered the inclusion of compatible pairs in paired donation, quality improvement, and a final plenary session on living donation. The plenary session covered long-term

outcomes for living donors, extended criteria living donors, rehabilitation and long-term follow up, and the complex interactions between donors and their families. In addition to an extensive educational program, the ISODP meeting also had an excellent social program, including a very memorable conference dinner. Attendance at this conference enabled me to gain an understanding of the regional differences in the issues and approaches to kidney transplantation, and provided me with invaluable knowledge that will influence my future research in kidney transplantation. Thank you again to TSANZ for this worthwhile opportunity.

American Association of the Study of Liver Diseases

13th – 17th November, 2015

San Francisco, USA

Janske Reiling

I would like to start by thanking the Society for its generous travel support, which made it possible for me to attend The Liver meeting 2015 from the American Association of the Study of Liver Disease. This conference took place at the Moscone West Convention Center in San Francisco from the 13th - 17th November 2015. The travel grant not only allowed me to attend the meeting but also to present my experimental work on the role of endotoxins on development of biliary injury in a rat model.

The first day of the meeting started with the joint AASLD/ILTS transplant course named Liver Transplantation-Bench and Bedside. Personally I think the highlights of the course were the recent achievements in the field of organ perfusion. Philipp Dutkowski presented the remarkable results of their series of hypothermic oxygenated perfused (HOPE) “orphan” livers. HOPE was able to reduce endothelial cell activation and decreases mitochondrial respiration thereby reducing the reperfusion injury. Hynek Mergental on the other hand presented the first case report where normothermic machine perfusion (NMP) was used to condition a suboptimal liver donated after circulatory death for transplantation with excellent results after 9 months. He furthermore provided an update on the large Phase 3 study currently underway in Europe and the UK comparing NMP with conventional static cold

storage. They have included 150 patients so far and they are hoping to finish including patients in the summer of 2016. I strongly believe that the use of these techniques is the only way forward to use more marginal grafts and expand the donor pool.

Dr Sandy Fang was this year’s presenter of the Thomas E. Starzl Transplant Surgery state-of-the-art lecture. She spoke about the possibility of stopping immunosuppression following transplant, which to me sounded very exciting. She presented data of her own pediatric patient cohort and also discussed trials currently underway in Europe and the US. A very exciting field of research which could have major implications on long-term outcomes of liver transplantation.

As part of the poster session on Sunday I was able to present the results of our study in the “Bile Acids, Cholangiocytes Biology and Experimental Cholestasis” session. Our work has focussed on the role of TNF- α converting enzyme (TACE) in the development of biliary injury in an LPS enhanced ischaemia-reperfusion animal model by selective inhibition using TIMP-3. We found that TACE inhibition prevented the development of biliary injury thereby identifying it as a potential therapeutic target. It was a great experience to meet scientists conducting research in the same field and discuss different approaches and research methodology.

It was a great experience for me as a PhD student to attend the Liver meeting 2015 and I’m very much looking forward to the next meeting.

Request for Expression of Interest

A Request for Expression of Interest was released by the Blood for developing a new organ matching solution to replace the world-leading National Organ Matching Service (NOMS) System. The request was released last Saturday 10th October in major newspapers and on the Blood Service website at:

<http://www.donateblood.com.au/corporate/tenders>

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2015 Meetings

The Transplantation Society Basic Science Symposium (TSS/BSS 2015)

11th -13th November, 2015

Lorne, VIC, Australia

More info go to <http://bss2015.org>

IPITA/IXA/CTS Joint Congress

15th - 19th November, 2015

Melbourne, VIC, Australia

More info go to <http://melbourne2015.org>

The Liver Meeting (American Association of the Study of Liver Diseases)

13th -17th November, 2015

San Francisco, USA

For more information go to www.aasld.org

ASMR 54th National Scientific Conference

15th -18th November, 2015

Adelaide, SA, Australia

For more information go to

www.asmr-nsc.org.au

2016 Meetings

3rd International 4 Corners of Cardiology Meeting

5th-6th February, 2016

Melbourne, VIC, Australia

For more information go

to www.4ccardiology.com

PGHTNCON 2016 (Paediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatobiliary, Transplant & Nutrition Conference)

12th-14th February, 2016

Jaipur, India

For more information go to www.pghtn.com

TSANZ PGC

9th-10th April, 2016

Sydney, Australia

For more information go to

www.tsanz.com.au/meetings/postgraduatetrainingcourse.asp

TSANZ ASM

10th-12th April, 2016

Sydney, Australia

For more information go to

www.tsanz.com.au/meetings/index.asp

4th ELPAT Congress (Ethical, Legal and Psychosocial Aspects of Transplantation)

22nd-25th April, 2016

Rome, Italy

For more information go

to www.esot.org/events-education/events/3905/overview

2016 American Transplant Congress

11th-15th June 2016

Boston, USA

For more information go

to www.atcmeeting.org

The Australian Transplant Games 2016

24th Sept - 1st Oct 2016

Western Sydney

<http://www.australiantransplantgames.com/>

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