

The Battle—15th April 2016

The Battle is a fun beach volleyball tournament first held in 2012 after a Queensland-based gynaecological cancer surgeon had a dream to create a fun, vibrant community event that would unite people of all ages and circumstances to raise money for much needed research into gynaecological cancer.

SAVE THE DATE

Friday night 15th
April 2016

Register your team at

www.thebattle.org.au



Tell us a little about yourself

I am originally from the UK and migrated to Australia in 2000. I have worked in health-related research since 2004 and completed my PhD in the area of neonatal telemedicine at the University of Queensland's School of Medicine in 2010. Two days a week I work at UQ's Centre for Online Health, also as a research fellow.

In my spare time I enjoy being outdoors, travelling, renovating my house, good food, kittens, growing chillies and learning Japanese.

What is your role at QCGC Research?

My role is as a research fellow, assisting the Director of Research with data analysis, publishing the results of completed studies, designing new studies and grant writing. My main focus is to contribute to the completion of the LACE trial.

What inspired you to undertake this role?

I have long been interested in women's health, I love data and I was looking to expand my research horizons. The opportunity to become involved in leading-edge research at QCGCR was fabulous and irresistible.

What is your most memorable moment?

I have two memorable moments: firstly visiting the peace memorial museum at Hiroshima, and secondly descending 98m into Gaping Gill, one of the largest caves in the UK

What is your favourite holiday destination?

Playa de Jandia, on the Canary Island of Fuerteventura - though sadly I don't get there often! Closer to home, I also enjoy visiting Japan and Melbourne whenever possible.

up close | Dr Nigel Armfield



Level 6 Ned Hanlon Building
Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital
Herston QLD 4029
Phone (07) 3646 3882
www.gyncan.org

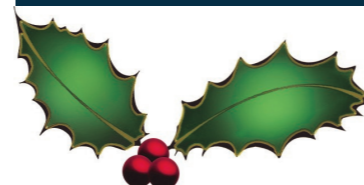


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Oncology

GOOD NEWS

GOOD NEWS Edition 10 - Dec 2015



The season of giving!

This Christmas, in lieu of gifts, why not ask for a donation to QCGC Research? It's likely you won't remember a gift after a while, but the gift of research is sure to live on! Knowing you've reached out and helped create a better future for women – what a great way to embrace the spirit of Christmas.

If you'd like to ask for or make a donation to QCGC Research in the spirit of Christmas, please complete the enclosed donation form, or visit us at gyncan.org and click on 'how you can help.'

Message from the Director of Research

Almost another year behind us and what a busy 12 months it has been for QCGC Research! During 2015 the team has focused on consolidating research projects, strengthening partnerships and welcoming new staff.

The annual gynaecological cancer symposium held in August at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, was another huge success. This year, the symposium focused on 'genetics' and featured the wonderful mother-and-daughter duo Merran Williams and Jo Hoey. Sincere thanks to Merran, Jo, and all our symposium presenters who gave up their Saturday morning to be with us. Thanks also to the patients and their guests who attended the event. Your interest and support of the research activities that we conduct at QCGC Research continues to inspire me.

In the latter half of the year, QCGC Research welcomed 17 kind-hearted volunteers who gave up time in their busy lives to help us enter data from 2,272 surveys for our LIGHT study (more details about the study are provided overleaf). We enjoyed welcoming these delightful volunteers to our office and getting to know them as they spent in excess of 500 hours (in total) entering data. What a tremendous effort!!

Exciting news for QCGC Research with the appointment of new staff member, Dr Nigel Armfield. Nigel joins us as a research fellow – a newly created position jointly funded by Cherish Women's Cancer Foundation and QCGC Research. Sincere thanks to the board of Cherish for supporting this appointment.

Speaking of Cherish, plans for The Battle 2016 are well underway. Cherish Women's Cancer Foundation recently unveiled its refreshed branding for the Foundation and the Battle (formerly known as Battle Against Ovarian Cancer). We are delighted that Cherish has nominated QCGC Research once again as its research partner for the event. Please mark your diaries and get ready to hit the sand on Friday 15 April 2016 from 4:30pm. It promises to be another great night at Sandstorm Beach Club.

I wish you all a wonderful festive season and look forward to updating you with our continued progress in 2016.

With season's greetings.

Prof Andreas Obermair

Director of Research
QCGC

Obermair@gyncan.org



update | *feMMe*

your support is vital

Here at QCGC Research, we have one clear purpose and mission:

'to research and develop the best standard of care for women experiencing gynaecological cancer.'

To make this mission a reality, we welcome donations, grants and fundraising initiatives from our valued supporters.

We receive minimal government funding and therefore rely on the support of generous individuals and community-minded organisations.

We were recently advised by a Lismore-based solicitor of a very generous bequest of over \$29,000. Although we can't acknowledge her by name, we want to acknowledge the special lady who left us this gift. Her gesture is very much appreciated. A contribution like this is so valuable to continuing research into gynaecological cancer. If you'd like to talk about leaving a bequest in your will too, please contact Lisa Harrold (07)3646 5486 or l.harrold1@uq.edu.au

The feMMe trial is investigating conservative and kinder treatment options for patients with endometrial cancer (EC). feMMe is a clinical trial which evaluates the effectiveness of the intra-uterine device (Mirena) with Metformin (a powerful diabetes drug with anti-cancer properties) *or* weight loss for the treatment of early-stage EC as an alternative to major surgery.

The feMMe study has been steadily gathering momentum with 10 sites now open with another 3 nearly ready to open. Our best recruiting sites are the Christchurch Women's Hospital in New Zealand, The Royal Women's Hospital in Melbourne and the Townsville Hospital. There are currently 44 patients recruited to the

study, 18 have been randomised to the Mirena only arm, 13 to the Mirena + Metformin and 13 to the Mirena + weight loss arm.

Sites that are open are:

Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital, Mater Health Services, Gold Coast University Hospital, Greenslopes Private Hospital, The Wesley Hospital, Townsville Hospital, Royal Women's Hospital, King Edward Memorial Hospital, Christchurch Women's Hospital and Wellington Hospital

The feMMe trial is funded by the Australia New Zealand Gynaecology Group (ANZGOG), Cancer Australia, Lord Mayor's Community Trust & private donations.

update | *LigHT*

One of our newer trials, LigHT study, aims to examine how we can reduce the number of women who have a hysterectomy via an open abdominal approach in Australia. Hysterectomy is the most common gynaecological operation in Australia (around 29,000 pa) and the open abdominal approach is still performed in 1 in 4 patients requiring a hysterectomy. Less-invasive surgical approaches, including vaginal and laparoscopic (key-hole) hysterectomy, are associated with significant advantages in regards to health outcomes compared to the traditional open (abdominal) way.

We will determine current gynaecologist and patient barriers to the uptake of laparoscopic hysterectomy using interviews and surveys. In August 6000 surveys were sent to Queensland women who had undergone a hysterectomy in the last two years and gynaecological specialists. We are delighted with the 1 in 3 response rate. In fact, the response was so good that we engaged 17 volunteers to help us enter the information into a database for analysis. Next step is to establish two multi-disciplinary panel of experts to discuss the specialist and patient responses and develop an action plan to address the barriers.

update | *ECHO*

In our last newsletter we told you about an exciting new trial we had commenced. The ECHO trial is analysing the effect exercise has on tolerance to chemotherapy.

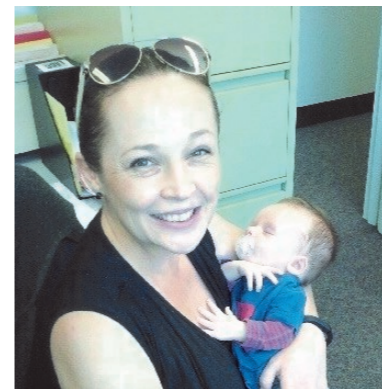
Participating in exercise during chemotherapy for other cancer types has been shown to reduce the number and severity of physical and psychosocial treatment-related side effects and improve quality of life. To date we have enrolled 8 patients to the study.

ECHO is a randomised controlled trial where women are randomised to either an exercise intervention or usual care.

Participants who receive the exercise intervention work closely with an accredited exercise physiologist on an appropriately prescribed exercise program while undergoing chemotherapy.



News from the team | *QCGC Brisbane*



Our team has grown (well sort of). We would like to congratulate Vanessa Venville (Behan) and her husband Peter on the safe arrival of Jaxon John (7lb 7oz) 16th September. Vanessa is the Trial Manager for LACC and is taking

some well deserved maternity leave. In Vanessa's absence, the LACC trial is being managed by the very capable Anne Hughes.

We'd also like to welcome Dr Nigel Armfield. Nigel has commenced with us as a Research Fellow on a part time basis. Learn more about Nigel on the back page in Up Close staff profile.

QCGC Research symposium 2015

Genetics was the focus of our annual research symposium held on 29 August. We welcomed a wonderful group of patients and guests to the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital on a beautiful sunny Saturday morning to hear about the latest developments in gynaecological cancer research.

This year's event was once again chaired by registered nurse and gynaecological cancer patient, Merran Williams. Merran was joined on stage by her daughter, Jo Hoey, who presented her BRCA story to educate and inform other women and families about the prevention options available to them.

We were fortunate to welcome other speakers to the event including Jennifer Birkham, Connie Groves, Dr Andrea Garrett and Dr Mark Appleyard who covered topics including 'how cancer can be inherited,' 'Lynch Syndrome' (another genetic condition that predisposes to cancer) and screening and prevention updates on breast, ovarian, uterine and bowel cancer. Much of the information presented at the annual symposiums is derived from trial programs like those being conducted at QCGC Research. Thank you to everyone that participated in the symposium. We look forward to seeing you at the next one.

patient profile | *Sharon Ryan*

My name is Sharon Ryan. I was born in Innisfail, North Queensland on New Year's Eve of 1957. My parents both grew up in this area and my childhood was blessed with lively extended family gatherings. As a young adult I moved to Brisbane with my husband Tony and here we've stayed. We have one daughter and one granddaughter who will soon celebrate her 18th birthday.

I am an enthusiastic reader, love the ocean, enjoy cooking and over the years have experimented in various ways to fly including hang-gliding, sky-diving and hot-air ballooning. I have two lively, happy dogs and we walk together in the forest behind our home every day.

I was originally diagnosed with cervical cancer in early 2010. At the time I was participating in a research project related to a genetic condition I have called Puetz-Jeghers Syndrome. As part of this research I had an MRI and the radiologist noticed "something odd" on my cervix which was subsequently discovered to be Adenoma Malignum – an unusual cervical cancer.

The treatment I had in 2010 included a radical hysterectomy followed by six weeks of pelvic radiotherapy. In late 2014 I went to theatre for surgery related to PJS and it was then that the return of the cancer was discovered with tumours found in the abdominal cavity.

I've always been quite pragmatic and had the motto of making the best of whatever I've got. Being diagnosed with cervical cancer has reinforced this and encouraged me to focus on what matters most. I've made a very conscious choice not to worry about the things I can't control and to use my time well to care for myself and others and enjoy and be grateful for something every day.

There is no one else in my immediate family with PJS – I do recall being told back in the early 1990s when I was undergoing genetic testing that I'm possibly a spontaneous mutation.



*If you'd like to help raise awareness about gynaecological cancer, please share your story with us!
Please send your details to Danielle Mills d.mills@uq.edu.au*