Translating pain assessment and management evidence into practice – the 2012 Cancer Challenge of the Year

The recently awarded 2012 TCRN Cancer Challenge of the Year (CCY) – Spaced Education: a tool to translate pain assessment and management evidence into practice – kicked off activities on May 16th with an enthusiastic planning workshop held at St George Hospital.

The 2012 CCY addresses the important clinical issue of sub-optimal pain management by instituting the routine use of a validated online case-based learning application to improve cancer pain assessment and reassessment practices across the TCRN – the ultimate aim being to improve cancer patients’ reported pain outcomes. The project builds upon the pilot palliative care Pain Assessment Spaced Education work undertaken at Sacred Heart during late 2011 by extending the spaced education tool into cancer care and across four additional hospitals within the TCRN.

Seventeen stakeholders from cancer services at Prince of Wales Hospital, The Sutherland Hospital, Border Medical Oncology Research Unit in Albury-Wodonga and St George Hospital joined the 2012 CCY research team at the planning workshop to learn more about the 2012 CCY and to provide invaluable guidance for the appropriate and efficient application of the project within their clinical setting. Participants expressed their interest in and support for the project, with each site identifying a Clinical Champion to lead project implementation within their setting and to liaise closely with the research team throughout the coming year.

The research team, in collaboration with a TCRN Translational Team, is now undertaking further consultation with each participating site in order to strengthen the collaborative partnerships and to ensure the availability of all resources required for efficient project implementation.

Meet the 2012 CCY research team

A/Professor Tim Shaw
Director, Workforce Education and Development Group, University of Sydney

A/Professor Shaw’s research interests centre on the use of education in the translation of evidence-based knowledge into practice change and improved patient outcomes. Tim has managed a number of substantial health workforce educational research and development projects in Australia including the development of the Australian National Patient Safety Education Framework, the Cancer (Learning Knowledge portal for the Commonwealth Government) and the SGCA Knowledge Portal for the International Society for Quality in Healthcare. He was a contributor to the WHO Patient Safety Curriculum Framework for Medical Schools and the Patient Safety Education Project (PSEP) in the United States.

Nicole Neneka
Spaced Education Project Coordinator, Cunningham Centre for Palliative Care

Nicole holds 15 years experience as a technical writer developing educational materials for vocational programs, including general health sciences and nutrition programs, and as a specialist developer of education materials for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations. She brings a wealth of health project management experience to the Spaced Education Project, having been the Project Officer for Qld Health Tropical Regional Services ‘Green Label’ program. In this role, Nicole worked collaboratively with remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities in the Mt Isa Health Service District to develop culturally appropriate nutrition resources to assist the identification and selection of healthy food and drink items. Nicole has worked closely with Prof Phillip and A/Prof Tim Shaw for the past 12 months in implementing the pilot palliative care Pain Assessment Spaced Education work undertaken with senior clinicians at Sacred Heart.

TCRN membership structure

The TCRN has been reviewing its membership structure over the past few months, with the overall aim of improving the collaborative interaction of the membership, streamlining mechanisms for activity reporting, providing better governance and facilitating a focused approach to achieving the TCRN’s goals and objectives.

A modified membership structure was endorsed by the Leadership Council during their most recent meeting on 31st May. The new structure will see the current individual TCRN membership transition to a group approach in the coming months.

Under the revised membership rules, all TCRN members must be aligned with a TCRN Group headed by a Responsible Member. While membership for current Full, Provisional and Student members will remain active under the previous membership rules until the time of annual review, members may elect to make an earlier transition to a group entity.

The TCRN Operations and Projects Team will be communicating directly with all members during the months of June and July regarding the revised membership structure and how this will affect you.
Cancer Grand Rounds 2012

TCRN Director and Director of the SESLHD Area Cancer Services, Professor Robyn Ward, commenced the inaugural Prince of Wales Hospital Cancer Services Cancer Grand Rounds on Thursday 31st May 2012 with her presentation: ‘The Future of the Cancer Centre at Randwick: Crystal Balls and Glass Jaws’.

Professor Ward reflected on the history of cancer services at Prince of Wales Hospital and identified The Lowy Cancer Research Centre and the future combined Comprehensive Cancer Centre and Australian Advanced Treatment Centres as key building blocks to achieving the Cancer Centre’s vision of reducing the impact of cancer through research-led excellence in clinical care. The integral ‘connecting’ role of initiatives such as the TCRN and Health Science Alliance Institutional Biobanking to facilitate effective integration of research into clinical practice was emphasised. TCRN members are encouraged to attend the monthly Cancer Grand Rounds, which are held at the Prince of Wales Hospital Randwick Campus on the last Thursday of each month at 8am.

Details of the June 2012 Cancer Grand Round are:

**PRESENTER:** A/Professor Michael Jackson, Director of Radiation Oncology POWH

**TOPIC:** Radiation Oncology – the Present and Future at Prince of Wales

**WHEN:** Thursday 28th June, 8–9am; morning refreshments provided from 7:30am

**WHERE:** John Dwyer Lecture Theatre, POWH, Randwick. Click here for directions

Look out for details of the monthly Cancer Grand Rounds series in each edition of Nexus.

Lowy Biorepository online

Researchers requiring access to biospecimens and associated clinical data can now visit the Lowy Biorepository online:

www.biorepository.unsw.edu.au

As a research support service, the Lowy Biorepository facilitates tissue processing, storage and retrieval, in addition to a specimen management system, at a discounted rate for TCRN members.

The Lowy Biorepository hosts the first Australian instance of caTissue – the biorepository tool of the NCI-supported Cancer Biomedical Informatics Grid (caBIG) – which allows biospecimen inventory management, tracking and annotation through a web interface, while protecting patient confidentiality via a hierarchical access system.

Visit the Lowy Biorepository website for details of Biorepository services and available biospecimens, or contact the Biorepository Manager biorepository@unsw.edu.au.

TCRN Travel and Professional Development Grants Awarded

The recipients of the Round 1 TCRN Travel and Professional Development Grants 2012 were notified of their successful applications earlier this week.

In order to provide as many grants as possible, the international conference grants were capped at $3,200 and the National conference grants at $1,500.

The graph to the right shows the breakdown of grants awarded by category.

The high proportion of international conference grants awarded is an impressive demonstration of the quality of research conducted by TCRN members, with abstract acceptance being a requirement for this grant category.

The TCRN Travel and Professional Development Grants are available to expand and enhance the knowledge and skills of our members in translational cancer-related research, at both national and international levels. Grant recipients must share the knowledge gained through their travel with the TCRN community. Each month, highlights of a number of travel experiences will be featured in Nexus.

Applications for Round 2 of the TCRN Travel and Professional Development Grants 2012 will open on Monday 16th July 2012.

CURRENT FUNDING OPPORTUNITY: TCRN PhD Scholarship Top-up Awards, Round 2 2012

Applications for Round 2 of the TCRN PhD Scholarship Top-up awards scheme are now being accepted.

Awards are available to students who have received funding via a peer-reviewed, competitive scholarship through UNSW and who are enrolled within any school in the UNSW Faculty of Medicine.

**Available awards**

- **First-year students:** 3-year top-up ($5,000 per year stipend + $5,000 research support for up to three years)
- **Second-year students:** 2-year top-up ($5,000 per year stipend + $3,000 research support for up to two years)
- **Final-year students:** 1-year top-up ($5,000 stipend)

Awards are competitive and merit-based, and the research project must be aligned to the TCRN core strengths, including demonstrating translational application. Supervisors of award applicants must be a TCRN Member listed here.

Download the TCRN PhD Scholarship Top-up Awards 2012 Guidelines and Applicant Form from the TCRN website. Applications close 4pm Friday 29 June 2012.

TCRN LOGO AND POWERPOINT TEMPLATE AVAILABLE FOR MEMBERS

A reminder that the TCRN logo and PowerPoint template is now available for TCRN members wishing to demonstrate your affiliation with the Network. Logo formats are available for use in email signature, print and electronic materials. PowerPoint templates combining your institutional template with the TCRN logo and/or acknowledgement slide can also be created on request. A UNSW template for TCRN members is currently available.

Request a version of the TCRN logo or PowerPoint template appropriate for your requirements by emailing the TCRN Operations and Projects Team at tcrn@unsw.edu.au with the subject line ‘Logo request’.