CENTRE FOR HEALTH ECONOMICS RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

CREST newsletter

DECEMBER 2024

CHERE CENTRE FOR HEALTH ECONOMICS RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

CREST CANCER RESEARCH ECONOMICS SUPPORT TEAM

In this edition:

CRICOS Provider No 00099F | TEQSA Provider ID PRV12060
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PET/CT in cancer care: weighing the costs and benefits of treatment monitoring

Assessing how individual patients are responding to cancer therapies is an important part of treatment management. Traditionally, anatomical imaging modalities like computed tomography (CT) or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) have been used to evaluate therapy response based on tumour size and morphology. However, functional imaging with positron emission tomography combined with computed tomography (PET/CT) offers some key advantages over standard of care (SOC) in monitoring therapy response.

PET/CT, which uses radiotracers like fluorodeoxyglucose (FDG), allows visualisation of tumour metabolism and activity at the cellular level. This changes in metabolism, as measured by decreased FDG uptake on PET, often precede anatomical changes seen on CT, particularly during immunomodulatory treatment of solid tumours (Lopci et al., 2022). Therefore, a metabolic response assessed by PET biomarkers —generally combined with low-dose CT — might improve clinical decision making. Being able to identify non-responders sooner allows to change ineffective therapies more quickly, potentially improving outcomes. PET/CT may also help avoid unnecessary therapies in patients who appear to be progressing on anatomical imaging but are actually responding metabolically.

While offering benefits over SOC, PET/CT also brings increased costs and radiation exposure compared to CT or MRI alone. As a result, careful consideration of how its benefits balance with cost is important. Health economic modelling techniques can be used to assess the long-term cost-effectiveness of technologies such as PET/CT to evaluate treatment response, offering valuable insights to guide clinical and reimbursement decisions.

A recent systematic review gathered the latest evidence on how the costs and benefits of PET/CT scans for monitoring cancer treatment response have been evaluated (van Mossel et al., 2024). The review identified 8 studies (5 cost-utility analyses and 3 cost-effectiveness analyses) looking at PET/CT's cost-effectiveness for diseases like lymphoma, advanced head and neck cancers, brain tumours, non-small cell lung cancer and cervical cancer. The results uncovered opportunities to make economic models more helpful for guiding clinical and reimbursement decisions. To enhance cost-effectiveness models evaluating PET/CT for therapy response monitoring, the authors advocated for the adoption of more advanced, transparent, and validated patient-level modelling approaches that account for the heterogeneity in treatment responses and the impact of false imaging classifications, coupled with value of information analysis to guide future research priorities.

Results of the review can be summarised as:

- Six studies concluded PET/CT was cost-effective for monitoring cancer treatment response
- One study found it wasn't cost-effective
- Another determined it was only cost-effective for a specific patient subgroup.

The review notes that given the rise of personalised medicine, reliance on cohort approaches to assess cost-effectiveness may need to change. Individual-based state-transition (or microsimulation) models can include individual patient characteristics to simulate the impact of personalised medicine and could provide a clearer picture of the value of PET/CT value for assessment of therapy response.

Interestingly, all studies found focused on chemotherapy response. As immunotherapy becomes increasingly prevalent in oncology, future economic evaluations are likely to shift their focus to this innovative treatment approach. Given the high costs associated with immunotherapy, early imaging and prompt evaluation of treatment response could potentially lead to significant cost savings.

Contributed by: Dr Rafael De Feria Cardet

References:

Lopci, E., Hicks, R. J., Dimitrakopoulou-Strauss, A., Dercle, L., Iravani, A., Seban, R. D., Sachpekidis, C., Humbert, O., Gheysens, O., Glaudemans, A., Weber, W., Wahl, R. L., Scott, A. M., Pandit-Taskar, N., & Aide, N. (2022). Joint EANM/SNMMI/ANZSNM practice guidelines/procedure standards on recommended use of [(18)F]FDG PET/CT imaging during immunomodulatory treatments in patients with solid tumors version 1.0. Eur J Nucl Med Mol Imaging, 49(7), 2323-2341. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00259-022-05780-2

van Mossel, S., de Feria Cardet, R. E., de Geus-Oei, L. F., Vriens, D., Koffijberg, H., & Saing, S. (2024). A Systematic Literature Review of Modelling Approaches to Evaluate the Cost Effectiveness of PET/CT for Therapy Response Monitoring in Oncology. Pharmacoeconomics. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40273-024-01447-y

The Trans-Tasman Radiation Oncology Group (TROG)

TROG welcomes new TROG Scientific Committee Chair - A/Prof Hien Le

TROG Cancer Research welcomed **A/Prof Hien Le** as the new Chair of the TROG Scientific Committee (TSC) in June. A/Prof Le is a Radiation Oncology Staff Specialist (Head of Research) at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and has been a key collaborator on numerous TROG trials while also serving on several of TROG's committees.

He will be supported by A/Prof Sweet Ping Ng, a Consultant Radiation Oncologist at the ONJ Cancer Centre at Austin Health in Melbourne, who was appointed as Deputy Chair of the TSC.

We thank outgoing Chairperson, A/Prof Sasha Senthi, for his significant contribution and leadership of the TSC. He served as the Radiation Oncologist Representative on the TSC for six years, before moving to the role of TSC Chair in 2021.

Register now for the 2025 TROG ASM and workshops

Registration is now open for the TROG Cancer Research 2025 Annual Scientific Meeting being held 18-21 March 2025 in Brisbane, Qld.

The meeting is themed *'Advancing cancer care everywhere: integrating inclusiveness and innovation into cancer trials'* and an exciting program is planned, including international keynote speaker Dr Quynh-Thu Le, Chair of the Department of Radiation Oncology at Stanford University, US.

You can also register now for the full-day workshops on Tuesday 18 March including:

- **Clinical Research Education Workshop (CREW):** This forum aims to equip all TROG members – including trial coordinators, data managers, research nurses and research managers – with the tools to take the next steps in conducting high-quality clinical research and excellent data management. The workshop covers areas including professional growth and teletrials, with Kaye Hewson, Director of the Australian Teletrials Program leading a session on the future of teletrials in radiation oncology in Australia.
- **Technical Research Workshop:** This workshop for radiation oncologists, radiation therapists and medical physicists is designed to facilitate participation in clinical trials and to promote the use of new technology in clinical research.

www.trogasm.com.au

New findings from TROG 14.02 RAIDER trial published

Significant new phase II findings from the TROG 14.02 – RAIDER trial have been published in *European Urology* journal, offering promise for the use of complex adaptive radiotherapy as an alternative to radical surgery for bladder cancer.

The trial, led by The Cancer Research Institute (UK), evaluated standard whole bladder radiotherapy (WBRT), standard-dose adaptive radiotherapy (SART) and dose-escalated adaptive radiotherapy (DART). Under the leadership of Prof Farshad Foroudi as TROG lead PI, TROG contributed almost 10% of the 345 participants from six recruiting sites in Australia and New Zealand.

The study found the DART approach was safe and feasible, with a relatively low rate of serious side effects and similar survival rates to those seen in patients undergoing cystectomy.

TROG Cancer Research was the Australian sponsor of the trial, and was responsible for trial co-ordination and Radiation Therapy Quality Assurance (RTQA) for the Australian trial centres.

Read the paper in *European Urology*

FASTRACK II trial highlighted at ASTRO Meeting

Professor Shankar Siva shared the practice-changing findings from the TROG 15.03/ANZUP 16001 – FASTRACK II trial at the Presidential Symposium lecture at the American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO24) meeting in Washington DC, USA in September.

Prof Siva was the first Australian to present the Presidential Symposium lecture at an ASTRO conference. He outlined advances in the use of stereotactic ablative radiation therapy (SABR) for patients with inoperable kidney cancer, as confirmed by the *Focal Ablative STereotactic RAdiosurgery for Cancers of the Kidney – a Phase II Clinical Trial (FASTRACK II)* trial, which is run in collaboration with the Australian and New Zealand Urogenital and Prostate Cancer Trials Group (ANZUP).

View Prof Siva's presentation on FASTRACK II

Australia New Zealand Gynaecological Oncology Group (ANZGOG)

ANZGOG 2025
Annual Scientific Meeting

Mark your calendar for the ANZGOG 2025 Annual Scientific Meeting, taking place from **5–7 March 2025** at the Hyatt Hotel in Canberra. This year's theme, *Reflections and Projections: Looking Back to Move Forward*, highlights 25 years of progress while exploring the cutting-edge innovations shaping the future of patient care.

This premier event gathers leading national and international experts in gynaecological medicine, radiation and surgical oncology, pathology, basic scientists, translational and quality of life researchers, study coordinators and nurses, as well as our partners in the pharmaceutical industry.

The Annual Scientific Meeting is a hub for learning about the latest advancements in gynaecological cancer care while offering education, professional development, and collaboration opportunities for members and industry professionals alike.

We are delighted to welcome as our distinguished International Keynote Speakers:

- A/Prof David Tan, Medical Oncologist and Senior Consultant, National University Cancer Institute, Singapore
- Dr Lisa Bazette-Matabele, Gynaecological Oncologist, University of Botswana, School of Medicine, Rwanda
- Prof Carien Creutzberg, Radiation Oncologist, Leiden University Medical Centre, Netherlands

A highlight of the event is the Pure Science Symposium, a dedicated platform for scientists and clinicians to learn, share and explore cutting-edge research in pre-clinical and translational science.

Don't miss this chance to connect with colleagues, learn from esteemed speakers, and play a part in shaping the next chapter of gynaecological cancer research.

Earlybird closes on Tuesday, 14 January 2024, register now to secure your space.

For more information, please visit www.anzgogasm.org.au

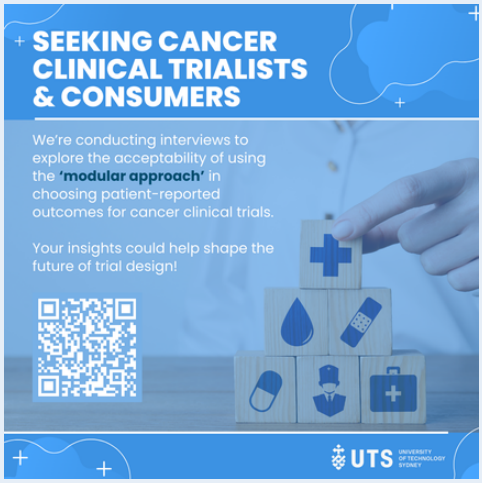
ANZ GOG | Advancing research *saving lives*

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

Have you heard of using the **'modular approach'** in questionnaires? It tailors the questions to what matters most for people's quality of life during a clinical trial.

But why hasn't this method been used much in cancer clinical trials? Participate in these interviews to share your thoughts!

For more information:
https://utsau.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_23GneJZPY2Tp4H4



Australian and New Zealand Urogenital and Prostate Cancer Trials Group (ANZUP)

Some recent ANZUP news highlights

ANZUP's trial portfolio continues to grow. We currently have 6 ANZUP-led and 1 co-badged trial in recruitment, including our new prostate cancer genomics study GenI-AIRSPACE. We also have 15 studies in follow-up, and many currently in development. You can read more about our trials on our website here.

Best of GU Oncology Evening Symposium

We held our Best of GU Evening Symposium on Wednesday 20 November in Sydney. The Best of GU is a collaboration between ANZUP and the Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand (USANZ). It featured highlights from 2024 meetings, including the latest management, and clinical trials research in urogenital and prostate cancers. Prof Ian Davis and Carole Harris were the Convenors with a great line up of speakers including Prof Helen O'Connell, Prof Manish Patel, Prof Dickon Hayne, Prof Lisa Horvath, Prof Michael Hofman, Dr Carole Harris, Natasha Roberts and Ray Allen covering all aspects of GU cancer research. Many thanks to our sponsors who these events would not be possible without: Astellas, AstraZeneca, Eisai, Johnson & Johnson and MSD.

Bladder and Prostate Masterclass Program

The Bladder and Prostate Masterclass Program was held in Sydney on Thursday 28 and Friday 29 November.

This was a multidisciplinary educational program Convened by Tahlia Scheinberg and Cam McLaren. The 1½ day workshop was designed to help trainees develop their clinical trial ideas in Bladder and Prostate cancer and focused on:

- An in depth look at trial design
- Clinical trials grant opportunities and grant submissions
- The trial coordination process
- Current trends in Prostate and Bladder Cancer Clinical Trials research
- Review of trials with rich data to workshop future applications of the data

The event featured an array of multidisciplinary experts and speakers - and was a huge success! Many thanks again to our Platinum Sponsor Astella and Supporters AstraZeneca and Pfizer – who make these events possible.

#ANZUP25 ASM Save the date!

The ANZUP 2025 Annual Scientific Meeting is being held in Sydney from 20-22 July with the convening committee, ably led by Carole Harris. Our theme for 2025 is ***"Listen, Reflect, Connect"***.

Registrations will open in early 2025, and we look forward to seeing you in Sydney!

ANZUP®
Cancer Trials Group Limited

Australasian Leukaemia & Lymphoma Group(ALLG)

Better treatments...
Better lives.

Inaugural ALLG HSANZ Clinical Trials Fellowship Award

ALLG is delighted to introduce Dr Arina Martynchyk as our inaugural ALLG HSANZ Clinical Trials Fellow for 2025.

Dr Martynchyk is a Research Fellow at Austin Health Haematology and the Olivia Newton-John Cancer Research Institute in Melbourne, Victoria. Dr Martynchyk's ALLG Fellowship research project is titled *"Hearing patient voices in blood cancer research: Patient Reported Outcome use, implementation and reporting in trials conducted by ALLG."*

This project involves research to define the optimal patient-reported outcomes measures to embed as best practice in ALLG clinical trial development pathways, aiming to accelerate understanding of the best quality of life tools in the context of novel blood cancer treatments like immunotherapies and CAR-T therapy.

Dr Martynchyk said, "I'm excited to be the inaugural ALLG Clinical Trials Fellow. Through researching the best quality of life tools and timepoints for novel blood cancer treatments, we can better understand the patient experience and incorporate this into treatments and care."

The ALLG HSANZ Clinical Trials Fellowship provides a pathway for emerging clinical trial researchers to build their career and undertake a research to drive *Better treatments... Better lives* for patients with blood cancer. To find out more, visit www.allg.org.au/support-us/our-campaigns.

ALLG Fellow Dr Arina Martynchyk with ALLG Scientific Advisory Chair, Professor Judith Trotman

ALLG 2024 Life Members (L-R) Professor Jeffrey Szer AM, Ms Angela Bayley, Professor Peter Browett

ALLG November Scientific Meeting

ALLG held our biannual Scientific Meeting from 12 – 15 November 2024 in Melbourne. Delegates enjoyed a comprehensive scientific program across eight disease Scientific Working Parties and a range of workshops on Teletrials, Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia (ALL) and Minimal Residual Disease (MRD) in Acute Myeloid Leukaemia.

We also welcomed our newest ALLG Life Members at the Scientific Meeting. ALLG Life Membership recognises a significant and sustained contribution to the advancement of haematology research and the objectives of the ALLG.

Congratulations to:

- **Ms Angela Bayley**, Senior Data Manager and Clinical Trial Manager at Westmead Hospital;
- **Professor Peter Browett**, consultant haematologist at Auckland City Hospital, Professor of Pathology in the Department of Molecular Medicine and Pathology at University of Auckland, and Chair of ALLG's Safety and Data Monitoring Committee; and
- **Professor Jeffrey Szer AM**, senior haematologist at Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre and The Royal Melbourne Hospital and Editor-in-Chief of Internal Medicine Journal.

The ALLG also launched our 2024 Annual Review at the Scientific Meeting, which is available to download at www.allg.org.au.

ALLG Scientific Meetings are for ALLG Members, providing attendees with a forum to discuss and present the latest updates in blood cancer treatments and research. We welcome new and current haematologists and professionals to join the activities of the ALLG. Learn more about ALLG's Scientific Meetings and how to join ALLG.

ALLG at ASH 2024

ALLG members have a record 11 trial abstracts accepted for presentation at the 2024 American Society of Hematology (ASH) Meeting. Accepted abstracts represent the best and most novel research in the field and are presented to 35,000+ meeting attendees. Congratulations to all ALLG investigators and teams involved in the following trials.

Oral Presentation:

- CML13 ASCEND – Associate Professor David Yeung;
- AMLM25 INTERVENE – Dr Chyn Chua;
- AMLM26 INTERCEPT – Dr Sun Loo;
- MM24 ISAMYP – Associate Professor Peter Mollee;

Poster Presentation:

- ALL09 SUBLIME – Dr Omali Pitiyarachchi;
- AMLM27 ImPRESS – Professor Steven Lane;
- BM13 – Professor Nada Hamad;
- National Blood Cancer Registry (NBCR) – Dr Nisha Thiagarajah;
- NHL32 PCNSL BLOCK – Dr Maciej Tatarczuch;
- NHL35 PACIFIC – Dr Katharine Lewis;
- MDS05/D1 – Associate Professor Anoop Enjeti

Healthcare resource utilisation and cost associated with allogeneic haematopoietic stem cell transplantation: a scoping review

Allogeneic haematopoietic stem cell transplantation (allo-HSCT) is an effective therapy for many malignant and non-malignant diseases. However, allo-HSCTs are high-risk, complex procedures associated with potentially fatal and long-term complications. Understanding the health resource utilisation (HRU) associated with allo-HSCT is important in assessing the delivery of this procedure and forecasting future healthcare expenditures and resource requirements.

Method

Eligibility criteria included studies of primary research written in English, with full-text availability. Studies that reported HRU and/or costs associated with adult (≥ 18 years) allo-HSCT were included.

Data analysis included summarising details of the HRU and costs extracted from the study data based on the elements and timeframes reported. Monetary values were standardised to 2022 United States Dollars (USD).

Results

HRU. Length of stay (LOS) was the most commonly reported HRU measure. Initial hospitalisation ranged from 9 (peripheral blood/ bone marrow; PB/BM) to 73 days (myeloablative conditioning; MAC), 13 (reduced intensity conditioning; RIC) to 43.36 days (matched related donor; MRD, MAC) at 100-days, and 19 (haploidentical) to 64 days (MRD, MAC) at 1-year.

Cost. The total cost of an allo-HSCT, ranged from $63,096 (RIC) to $782,190 (double cord blood; CB) at 100-days and $69,218 (RIC) to $637,193 at 1-year (not stratified). Overall, RIC conditioning was associated with lower cost and LOS both during the initial phases of allo-HSCT and at 1-year compared to MAC. CB-derived stem cells were associated with higher total costs.

Whilst overall trends in HRU and costs, based on donor, stem cell source, and conditioning regimen were evident, quantifying these trends to inform the design and delivery of health care for allo-HSCT is challenging due to the heterogeneity in how the results have been reported.

Conclusion

There was heterogeneity in the reporting of HRU and costs associated with allo-HSCT in the literature, making it difficult for clinicians, policymakers and government to draw definitive conclusions regarding the resources required for the delivery of these services. Further research is needed to understand the key determinants of HRU and costs associated with allo-HSCT in order to better inform the design and delivery of health care for HSCT recipients and ensure the quality, safety and efficiency of care.

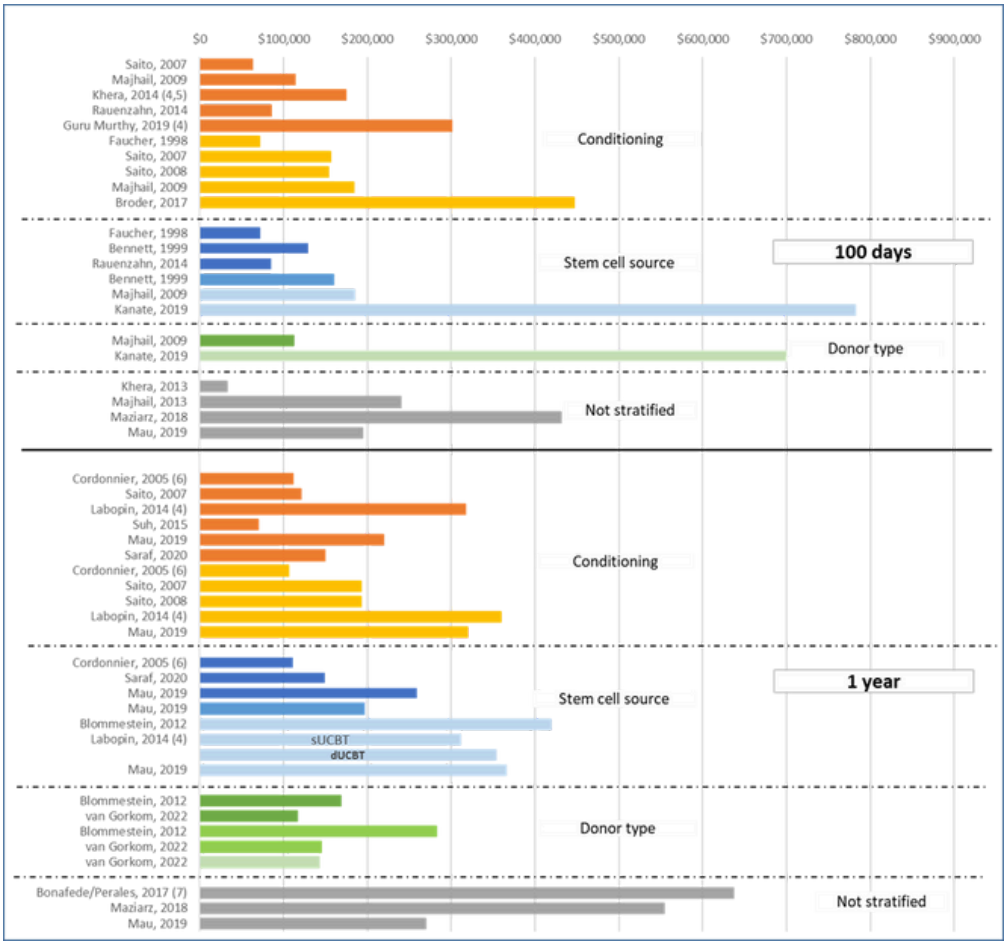
Contributed by: Nancy Kim

Reference

Kim NV, McErlean G, Yu S, Kerridge I, Greenwood M, Lourenco RA. Healthcare Resource Utilization and Cost Associated with Allogeneic Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation: A Scoping Review. Transplant Cell Ther. 2024 May;30(5):542.e1-542.e29. doi: 10.1016/j.jtct.2024.01.084. Epub 2024 Feb 7. PMID: 38331192.

Figure: Total Cost by reported timeframe

Abbreviations:
dUCBT = double umbilical cord blood transplant;
sUCBT = single umbilical cord blood transplant



Thoracic Oncology Group Australia (TOGA)

TOGA Announces Recipients of the 2025 Inspirational Research Grants

This year marks the second awarding of TOGA's Inspirational Research Grants, funded entirely by generous philanthropic donations to increase research into prevention, treatment, or improved lives of those living with thoracic cancers.

The two recipients for the 2025 Inspirational Research Grants are in the field of lung cancer microbiome research.

Dr. Mark Adams has been awarded a grant for his project titled: *'Pioneering Lung Cancer Microbiome Research in Australia: Standardising Sequencing, Bioinformatic Analysis and Clinical Associations Between Interstate Institutions.'*

This research will focus on metagenomic sequencing to accurately map the lung microbiome's taxonomic and functional makeup. This microbial profile will then be examined in relation to treatment responses, assessing whether the lung microbiome contributes to treatment outcomes.

Dr. Sagun Parakh will explore the impact of the lung microbiome on immunotherapy efficacy and toxicity in his project *'Evaluating the Impact of the Lung Microbiome on the Efficacy and Toxicity of Immunotherapy in Lung Cancer Patients.'*

This research delves into the taxonomic and functional composition of the lung microbiome to understand the correlation with the development of immune-mediated adverse events. This will determine if the lung microbiome plays a role in development of toxicity to immunotherapy treatment.

In addition to the general research grants, TOGA is proud to announce a collaborative grant with ALK Positive Australia. This grant specifically supports research dedicated to ALK+ Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer (NSCLC).

A/Prof Venessa Chin has been selected for her project *'Unravelling Genomic Diversity in ALK-Positive Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer: Insights from Paired RNA/DNA Sequencing of Circulating Tumour Cells.'*

This project employs a novel, new and ultrasensitive method to examine cell clones that may be present at diagnosis of ALK+ metastatic NSCLC.

When lung cancer research receives less than 6% of cancer research funding, TOGA recognises the importance of grants such as the Inspirational Research Grant in fighting against lung cancer.

Dr Megan Sanders and TOGA CEO expresses, "we're pleased to fund two high-caliber grant applications exploring how the microbiome influences the clinical efficacy and toxicity response to immunotherapy. Immunotherapy has revolutionised lung cancer treatment, but some patients still experience relapse, non-response, or severe side effects. Research like this is critical for optimising immunotherapy outcomes and improving the lives of lung cancer patients."

The TOGA Inspirational Research Grant program relies entirely on the generosity of donors. To continue this program and fuel further innovation in thoracic cancer research, we encourage everyone to consider donating.

Donate to lung cancer research today.

TOGA
Thoracic Oncology Group Australasia

TOGA Set to Climb Mt Kosciuszko with Prof Nick Pavlakis for Lung Cancer Research

Prof Nick Pavlakis is leading an exciting hiking challenge up Mount Kosciuszko in March 2025.

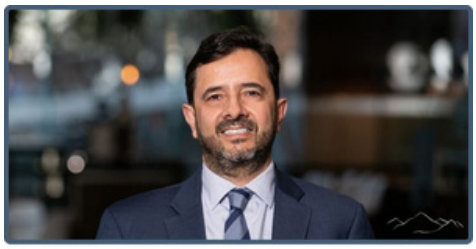
With less than 6% of cancer research funding going to lung cancer research, this event aims to raise vital funds for lung cancer research and treatments.

With your support we are able to:

- Fund essential research: Support the development of new treatments and therapies.
- Improve patient outcomes: Help to enhance the quality of life for individuals battling lung cancer.
- Contribute to a brighter future: Join us in the fight against this disease.

Every dollar you donate brings us closer to a world without lung cancer. To make a contribution and make a difference, donate here.

If you are interested in joining Nick and the team on the hike, you can find out more here. Hurry, spots limited.


TOGA'S KOSI CHALLENGE
WITH PROF NICK PAVLAKIS

Cancer Symptoms Trials (CST)

Geriatric Oncology Concept Development Workshop with Professor William Dale

The Palliative Care Clinical Studies Collaborative (PaCCSC) and Cancer Symptom Trials (CST) are calling for submission of geriatric oncology clinical trial concepts for presentation and workshopping.

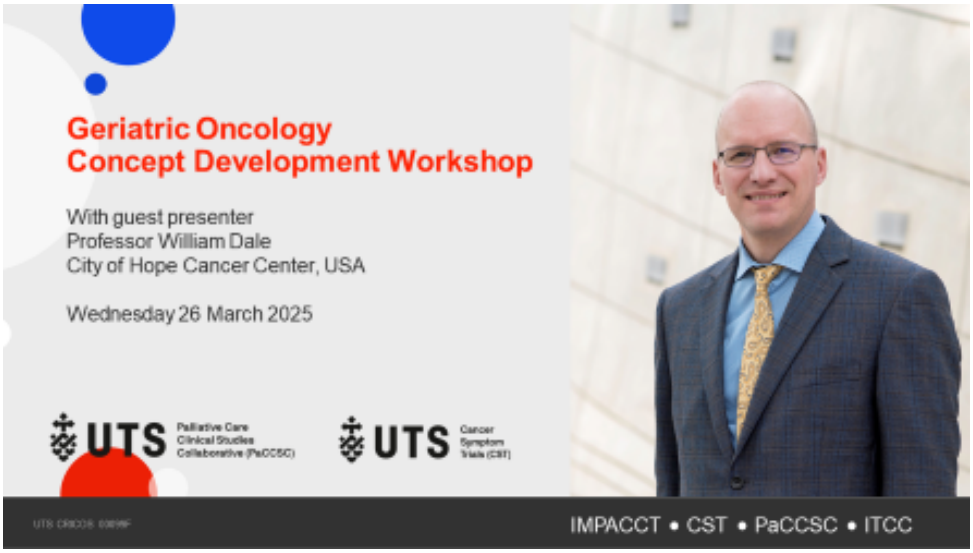
PaCCSC & CST are hosting a Geriatric Oncology Concept Development Workshop featuring a presentation by geriatric oncology expert, Professor William Dale from City of Hope Cancer Center in the US.

This workshop will bring together experts in geriatric oncology as well as health economists, quality-of-life experts, and statisticians.

Don't miss this unique opportunity to workshop your study idea with Professor Dale and other invited experts!

Submit your study concept:
https://bit.ly/3YOEamq

Event details
Date: Wednesday 26 March 2025
Time: 9.30am - 2.30pm
Venue: University of Technology Sydney
More info: cst@uts.edu.au



PaCCSC & CST Research Forum 2025 | The Science behind the Art of care: Clinical trials in cancer symptoms and palliative care

Early bird registrations open!
27-28 March 2025 | International Convention Centre (ICC), Sydney

Clinical trials are critical for evaluating the efficacy and safety of the therapies we use in cancer symptom management and in palliative are. It is also essential that we evaluate how we work as multi-disciplinary teams, and how we communicate with patients and families.

In 2025, the PaCCSC & CST Research Forum explores the scientific foundations – the evidence - that informs practice to enhance quality of care.

If you are a researcher, healthcare professional or consumer with experience or interest in palliative care or cancer symptom management research, we invite you to take this opportunity to make connections, build your networks, and takeaway new knowledge that you can implement in your organisation.

Register now to secure your place at the early bird rate:
uts.edu.au/PaCCSCCST2025

Email enquiries to cst@uts.edu.au.
#PaCCSCCST2025

UTS Cancer Symptom Trials (CST)

DID YOU KNOW?

CREST RESOURCES

Did you know we have a dedicated section on our website full of resources to help investigators incorporate health economics and pharmacoeconomic analyses into trial protocols?

On our page we have available:

- Proforma documents for conducting an economic evaluation
- How to collect data
- How to estimate QoL scores
- Various factsheets and templates
- Video recordings of past workshops and webinars such as using Medicare data and HTA
- A number of useful links

If you have any suggestions for resources, please feel free to discuss with us by emailing crest@uts.edu.au

Resources

Breast Cancer Trials (BCT)

Breast Cancer Trials Welcomes Karen Price as CEO

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Karen Price as our Chief Executive Officer at Breast Cancer Trials (BCT). Karen has more than 25 years' experience in the health and NGO sectors, in roles across Federal and State Governments, and brings a wealth of skills and experience to the position.

Karen joins us at an exciting time for BCT, as we embark on a period of growth in our research and fundraising programs, and the implementation of our 2024-2029 Strategic Plan.

With expertise in stakeholder engagement, new business development, health sector advocacy and policy influence, research partnerships, health promotion campaigns, digital marketing and social media engagement, Karen has a passion for community and person-centred cancer prevention, improved treatments and cure efforts. We look forward to working with her.

46th Annual Scientific Meeting – Early Bird Registration Now Open

Registration is open for the BCT 46th Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM), which will be held at the Hotel Grand Chancellor, in Hobart, Tasmania, from Wednesday 23 – Friday 25 July 2025.

This is a fantastic opportunity for BCT members, breast cancer researchers and clinical trials personnel to share knowledge in the field of breast cancer trials research, and to learn about recent developments into the treatment of prevention of breast cancer.

Our confirmed international speakers include:

- **Professor Dame Lesley Fallowfield:** Professor of Psycho-oncology at Brighton & Sussex Medical School, University of Sussex where she is Director of the Sussex Health Outcomes Research & Education in Cancer (SHORE-C) group.
- Professor Reshma Jagsi: Lawrence W. Davis Professor and Chair of the Department of Radiation Oncology and a Senior Faculty Fellow in the Centre for Ethics at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, USA.

As part of the program, trainees in radiation oncology, medical oncology and surgical oncology are invited to participate in a workshop on Saturday 26 July. This is a free multidisciplinary session, with both presentations and MDT panel discussions from leading Australian and international breast cancer experts and is a fantastic networking and professional development opportunity.

Don't miss out on the premier event to stay up to date with breast cancer clinical trials research. For more information or to register visit www.bct2025.org.

Looking for the Perfect Christmas Gift?

The Australian Women's Health Diary is the perfect Christmas gift, secret Santa and stocking filler.

This diary does more than help organise our lives every day, it's packed with expert health advice important to every woman - like breast, heart, family, finance and mental health, along with diet, exercise and lots more.

This diary does more than help organise our lives every day, it's packed with expert health advice important to every woman - like breast, heart, family, finance and mental health, along with diet, exercise and lots more.

Plus, you'll be helping identify new treatments for the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australian women, giving hope to the 57 people diagnosed with breast cancer every day.

You'll feel great knowing you've given the gift of life this Festive Season.

Grab your copy from Newsagents, Woolworths, Participating Post Offices and womenshealthdiary.com.au

BREAST CANCER TRIALS

TRAINING & MENTORING

CREST STRUCTURED TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

Discover a hands-on approach to building your health economics skills and knowledge. If you're working on a clinical trial or cancer research, understanding health economics components is vital. The Structured Training Opportunity program by CREST, is design exclusively for members of Cancer Australia Clinical Trials Groups (CTGs).

As an STO participant, you'll receive:

- Expert guidance from a CREST health economist for your eligible project
- 30 to 40 hours of mentoring (typically across three months)
- Face-to-face sessions at the CREST office (complemented by online, phone and email support).

Find out more here.

Australia and New Zealand Sarcoma Association (ANZSA)

ANZSA Annual Scientific Meeting 2024

The 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) took place in Brisbane, bringing together experts from various clinical and research specialties involved in sarcoma care. This event was held alongside the 22nd International Society of Limb Salvage General Meeting, creating an ideal platform for interdisciplinary collaboration.

The first day featured the inaugural Consumer Connection event, offering sarcoma patients, survivors, and carers a chance to connect with experts and each other. Highlights included Marianne Phillips on Ewing Sarcoma trials, survivor Harry Mullen's inspiring story, and insights from Fiona Maclean, Richard Boyle, and Angela Hong. Updates on osteosarcoma, soft tissue sarcoma treatments, and retroperitoneal sarcoma followed.

The day also included cutting-edge updates on osteosarcoma from our international guest speaker paediatric oncologist at Gustave Roussy Cancer Campus in Villejuif, France, Dr Nathalie Gaspar. The Great Debate on clinical trials sparked discussion, with Marianne Phillips' motion passing. The day ended with a panel on multidisciplinary care and the ANZSA AGM, where new board directors Joanna Connor and Vivek Bhadri were announced.

On the final day, international guest speaker Professor Paul Huang, the leader of the Molecular and Systems Oncology Group at the Institute of Cancer Research. He shared insights on the development of precision medicine in soft tissue sarcomas, the Global Sarcoma Accelerator Network, and trends from the UK's data sets.

A special mention to all who submitted an Abstract/ePoster for the event. Four standout presentations were delivered by Elizabeth Connolly, Karan Gupta, Claire Laurie, and Jacqui McGovern, who won the Choong Dickinson Poster Prize for her osteosarcoma 3D models and humanized bone microenvironments to study tumour remodelling and lung metastasis.

ANZSA would like to extend a big thank you to all our guest speakers who contributed to the event and all our members who presented during the meeting. Thank you to all the members and consumers who attended, and we look forward to welcoming you back next year in Hobart for the 2025 Annual Scientific Meeting.

To view more and stay up to date, please follow us on our social media – Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter.

Research Updates

SU2C- SARC032 – Study published in The Lancet.

- Safety and Efficacy of Pembrolizumab, Radiation Therapy, and Surgery Versus Radiation Therapy and Surgery for Stage III Soft Tissue Sarcoma of the Extremity (SU2C-SARC032): An Open-Label, Randomised Clinical Trial. Read the full study here - https://lnkd.in/g-Q69Zau

RESAR – approaching new milestone of 3000 cases.

- This initiative is focused on improving outcomes for RPS patients in Australia and beyond.

Myxoid Liposarcomas (MLS) Registry- New site added.

- The Canberra Hospital was added as a new site.

Learn more about clinical trials and studies here - Our Sarcoma Research

The Great Sarcoma Plankathon

July marks World Sarcoma month. In 2025, we will band together to become plank heroes and raise a sweat, and vital and funds for crucial sarcoma research. This is a challenge for all ages and abilities to raise money to improve outcomes for those braving sarcoma.

We'd like you to sign up and start building a community of volunteers and participants to take part. The larger we can make our community, the more we can raise. You can also help by connecting us with potential corporate sponsors, or even local gyms, clubs or schools that might want to sign up.

Scan this QR code to sign up and express your interest:

ANZSA
Australia and New Zealand Sarcoma Association

Australasian Gastro-Intestinal Trials Group (AGITG)

World-first trial investigating potential new treatment for cholangiocarcinoma

A new AGITG trial, BIL-PPP, is investigating a potential new treatment option for cholangiocarcinoma – a rare and aggressive cancer arising in the bile ducts and gallbladder.

Led by Prof Niall Tebbutt, Dr Fiona Chionh and Dr Laura Tam, the BIL-PPP trial is exploring the efficacy of adding olaparib, a PARP inhibitor, to durvalumab, an immunotherapy drug, in controlling locally advanced or metastatic cholangiocarcinoma as a treatment option after initial chemotherapy and immunotherapy. This combination has shown promise in improving survival outcomes for patients with ovarian cancer. In clinical studies, the addition of PARP inhibitors has led to longer progression-free survival rates and has been especially effective in patients with BRCA mutations.

There have been no previous clinical trials exploring the addition of PARP inhibitors to immunotherapy maintenance treatment for cholangiocarcinoma, making BIL-PPP an exciting world-first study.
Learn more about the BIL-PPP study

Recap of the 26th AGITG Annual Scientific Meeting

The 26th AGITG Annual Scientific Meeting took place on 18–21 November 2024 at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, Meeanjin Brisbane.

Convened by A/Prof Sina Vatandoust and Prof Stephen Ackland, over 450 delegates were in attendance.

Sessions spotlighted innovative trial designs and underscored the importance of thinking beyond traditional approaches to GI cancer research for greater global impact.

Thank you to our International Invited Faculty:

- **Prof Cihan Gani**, University Hospital Tübingen, Germany
- **Prof Matthew Katz**, MD Anderson Cancer Center, USA
- **Dr Rodrigo O Perez**, Hospital Alemão Oswaldo Cruz, Brazil
- **Prof Deborah Schrag**, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, USA
- **Prof Cynthia Sears**, Johns Hopkins University, USA

We would also like to congratulate the winners of the 2024 AGITG Awards:

- **Jan Mumford**, John Zalcberg AO Award for Excellence in AGITG Research
- **A/Prof Andrew Dean**, in recognition of Chris Reichstein, AGITG Member Fundraiser of the Year Award
- **Dr Shehara Mendis**, Early Career Researcher Award for Excellence in AGITG Research
- **Townsville Cancer Centre**, Excellence in Site Performance Award, Regional, Rural and Remote Category
- **Flinders Medical Centre**, Excellence in Site Performance Award, Metropolitan Category
- **DYNAMIC-IV**, by A/Prof Amitesh Roy, Prof Jeannie Tie, Dr Wei Hong and A/Prof Rachel Wong, Best New Concept
- **Dr Olivia Comito**, Best of Posters

We hope to see you at our next ASM in Tarntanya Adelaide, on 24–27 November 2025!

Coming soon: A Seedpod of Yarns, a First Nations-led resource for patients, clinicians and community

Over the course of a year, Madison Shakespeare travelled Australia, yarning with others on what a self-determined cancer journey could look like for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

With an emphasis on GI cancers, the resulting video series is a seedpod of human experience and resilience, containing honest, actionable and culturally specific advice. It aims to develop culturally safe relationships with First Nations patients, carers, kin and community to ensure their awareness of treatment options and to facilitate their realisation of their self-determined cancer journeys.

Watch the trailer

Stay up to date with AGITG

Follow us on LinkedIn or @GICancer on X/Twitter for more updates.

AGITG
AUSTRALASIAN GASTRO-INTESTINAL TRIALS GROUP

CREST Updates

NEW factsheet now available

We've recently published a new factsheet on our website, *Including health equity consideration in economic evaluations*.

The factsheet covers the following key points:

- Healthcare resource allocation and priority setting typically consider clinical effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, and budget impact. Health equity considerations are increasingly important in decision-making. Currently, health equity is not systematically or quantitatively evaluated as part of that decision-making.
- Distributional cost-effectiveness analysis quantitatively analyses the equity impacts of health interventions and the trade-offs that can arise between equity and efficiency.
- Equity analysis is 'data hungry' and requires reporting of data according to equity-relevant strata from clinical trials and observational studies.

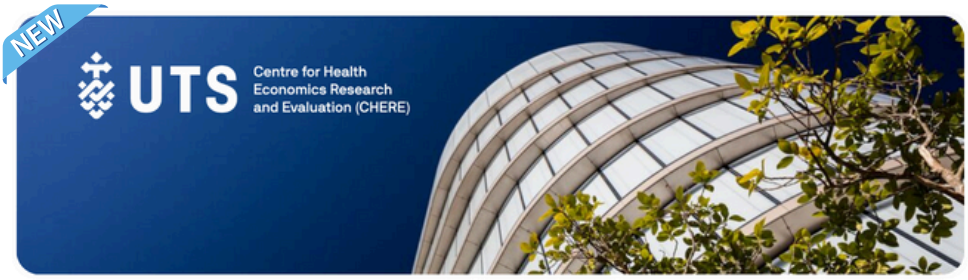
Other CREST factsheets can be found here, with more to be published next year. If you have any suggestion or ideas for a factsheet topic, please get in contact with us.

Joint CREST and CQUEST workshop 2025

CREST and CQUEST are hosting a joint workshop in February 2025 on health related quality of life (HRQL). This workshop is aimed at investigators, researchers and clinicians.

We'll send out final details in early 2025, but follow us on 'X' if you'd like to stay updated.

- CQUEST - @UTS_CQUEST
- CREST - @CHERE_UTS



Including health equity considerations in economic evaluations

CREST closure

A friendly reminder that CREST will observe soft closures between

- Monday, 16 December to Tuesday, 24 December and
- Thursday, 2 January to Friday, 10 January.

In addition to the soft closures, CREST will be on leave from Wednesday, 25 December to Wednesday, 1 January 2025.

There may be limited support during this time, however, please continue to send your requests to crest@uts.edu.au and the team respond when possible.

Merry CRESTmas!

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the CTGs and everyone who has made this year a great one. We appreciate all the support and the ongoing positive engagement.

CREST wish you and your loved ones a happy holiday season. May your holidays be filled with good food and memories to go on the highlight reel.

Merry CRESTmas and happy new year!