

Royal North Shore Hospital (RNSH)  
Surgical Education, Research and Training (SERT) Institute

SUMMARY JUNE - DEC 2018

- ✓ SERT progress at the Surgical Grand Rounds Oct 2018
- ✓ SERT Action Plan 2019 - 2021
- ✓ Sydney Medical Program (SMP)
- ✓ Coordinator, Surgical Teaching in the SMP appointment
- ✓ Postgraduate Research and Training
- ✓ Masters of Surgery
- ✓ Clinical Informatics Lead appointment
- ✓ Surgical Research Officer appointment
- ✓ Administration Officer appointment
- ✓ DASO update and appointments



## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Professor Tom Hugh

This is the fifth newsletter from the RNSH SERT Institute.

It is a pleasure to welcome the following new staff within the SERT Institute:

- **Dr Krishan Rasiah** has been appointed to a new role as the Coordinator, Surgical Teaching in the Sydney Medical Program to assist Associate Professor Margaret Schnitzler in delivering high quality teaching and support to medical students
- **Dr Richard Piper** to assist manager of the SERT Institute as the Clinical Informatics Lead, and
- **Judith Barker** has been appointed as an administrative officer
- Recent data manager appointments of **Susan O'Donnell** and **Sharon Cheng**

We have also reached out to anaesthesia and welcome the appointment of **Dr Matthew Doane, Anaesthesia Head of Research and Academics**, to the RNSH SERT Institute Executive Committee.

The SERT and DASO teams recently presented an update at the Surgical Grand Rounds, which proved to be a great opportunity to assess how far we have come in 18 months. This newsletter outlines a number of these key milestones, which I invite you to read through.

Additionally, I will like you to become a part of our vision and am interested to hear your thoughts on how we can continue to improve.

## SERT ACTION PLAN

Shelly Dhaliwal

We are attempting to employ an academic rigour to undertake needs assessment and strategic planning for the SERT Institute.

In 2017 and 2018 a review of the literature on academic surgery was undertaken. Additionally, key administrators and all RNSH surgical departments were engaged via:

- an extensive consultation process
- a quantitative assessment of need
- interviews with Surgical Directors of Training (conducted by Dr. Jonathon Parkinson)

This identified what interventions could be introduced to strengthen academic surgery at RNSH and those have formed the basis of SERT's **Academic Surgery Action Plan 2019 – 2021**. This document will soon be circulated to all Heads of Surgical Departments. A summary poster of this Action Plan has been prepared that is now up in the operating theatre areas.

Also, two manuscripts have already been prepared from our findings and these will be submitted to peer-reviewed journals.

Finally, a **research starter pack** is being prepared to offer guidance on how to get involved in surgical research at RNSH. This pack will be distributed to medical students and consultants.

## SYDNEY MEDICAL PROGRAM

A/Prof Margaret Schnitzler, Lead

A **new curriculum** for the Sydney Medical Program is due to be introduced in **2020**. In the planned revision, **the core surgical teaching block** will be in the **second year** of the program, rather than in third or fourth year as is the case at present. Another significant change is that students will be in the clinical environment for 3 days per week in second year, rather than only one. This earlier exposure to surgery will hopefully encourage more students to develop an interest in a surgical career.

There is certainly enthusiasm among medical students for more exposure to surgery in the earlier years of the program. In **November and December** this year we will be running the second **Summer Surgical Program at Northern**. This provides an opportunity for first and second year students to experience surgical practice with a clinical attachment to one of the surgical units for a week, and will build on the success of our inaugural Summer Surgical Program in 2017.



Also, **Dr Krishan Rasiah** has joined the SERT team as **Coordinator of Surgical Teaching in the Sydney Medical Program**.

Kris is a **Consultant Urologist** at the Royal North Shore, Ryde and Northern Beaches Network, North Shore Private, Macquarie University and the Sydney Adventist Hospitals.

Kris has a **PhD in prostate cancer research** and has been a recipient of prestigious **research fellowships** from the NH&MRC as well as the Cancer Institute of NSW. Kris leads a number of research projects at the Royal North Shore Hospital Campus and the Garvan-Kinghorne Institute.

## POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH AND TRAINING

Dr Jonathon Parkinson, Lead

Regarding **training**, I have met with representatives of each surgical department and discussed how each unit structures their training positions.

With respect to **research**, I am compiling a list of research activities across the campus. All components are being surveyed regarding their current research activities and how they feel they can improve research output. Much of the feedback so far has suggested **access to surgical data for research, including bio-statistical analyses** and **help with ethics/grants applications**.

We will provide all surgical departments with resources to help them undertake their research activities in an efficient and timely manner.

If you have any clinical research activities that might **generate media attention**, please contact us!!

Please contact us to help with your **academic appointment** with the University of Sydney

## MASTERS OF SURGERY

Dr Anthony Glover, Lead

The **'Surgical Skills' coursework subject** (SURG5031) offered by Northern Clinical School and the Discipline of Surgery is **currently being revised**. It aims to prepare junior doctors for surgical training and is a **compulsory subject** for the Surgical Skills stream of the Master of Surgery degree. It includes both online learning and a face to face workshop.

Building on an existing strong foundation, the course has been extended with new content added using the Canvas online learning platform. New content, readings and assessment have been added to cover **Principles of Surgical Care, Leadership and Management, and Scholarship and Teaching** featuring local, national and international surgeon leaders. As part of this course, the Semester 1 'Surgical Skills' workshop covering technical skills and communication was run in April with great support from Northern Clinical School academics and surgeons from Royal North Shore, Hornsby and Manly Hospitals.

I would like to thank the faculty for being able to participate in this valuable activity, which was much appreciated by the students. The Semester 2 workshop was held on 18th-19th October. Some pics from these workshops are below:



Moving forward due to the positive reviews of the revised course, the 'Surgical Skills' subject will be further modified and extended to develop **new content** and **additional subjects for the post-graduate courses**. Due to this there is **a great opportunity for clinicians and trainees to get involved** with teaching, development and running of this new content. If you are interested and would like to find out more, please contact me on [anthony.glover@sydney.edu.au](mailto:anthony.glover@sydney.edu.au).

## HELLO GOODBYE PARTY TRADITION



Professors Tom Hugh and Jas Samra covering the RMO evening shift during the annual RMO handover party.

The **"Hello Goodbye Party"** is a tradition at the RNS. At the end of each year, senior medical staff volunteer to provide cover on the wards to facilitate as many of the junior medical staff to attend the party.

This year **doctors Tom Hugh, Jas Samra, Stephen Ruff** and **John Vandervord** were the senior surgeons.

## NEW APPOINTMENTS

Clinical Informatics Lead - Dr Richard Piper

This exciting new appointment brings senior clinical experience as well as research and informatics experience to our Institute. This will enhance and expand our web presence and social media platform.



Richard is an **Intensive Care Specialist** at RNSH up until 2018, after which he took up his appointment at the SERT Institute. His research experience includes a B.Med.Sci, and M.D. in the area of **cerebrovascular physiology** (Institute of Neurological Sciences, Prince Henry Hospital, Sydney). He was subsequently awarded a **NH&MRC Neil Hamilton Fairley Scholarship**, and studied overseas in Victoria Hospital, London Ontario, at the AC Burton Laboratory with Professor Bill Sibbald. Richard returned to RNSH upon completing a **PhD in cerebrovascular dysfunction in sepsis** and has a **longstanding interest in clinical informatics**.

## Surgical Research Officer – Dr Julian Quinn, PhD

Julian has over 25 years' post-doctoral experience mainly in the areas of osteoporosis, orthopaedics and cancer growth in bone. He gained a **doctorate** in bone physiology from **Oxford University, UK**, and later was awarded a Melbourne University at St Vincent's Institute. After this, Julian moved to Prince Henry's (now Hudson) Institute in Clayton, Vic, and, then in 2014, Julian joined the Garvan Institute. Julian has **110 peer reviewed publications**, has held **3 NHMRC project grants** and sat on NHMRC grant review panels. He has wide expertise in data analysis, ethics applications, lecturing, student mentoring and report writing.



## Administrative Officer – Judith Barker

Judy has joined the SERT to assist in the smooth running of day to day activities within the organisation. She has a **background in Education and Training** with a **Bachelor Degree in Adult Education**.

Also, Judy is a **First Aid Trainer** as well as a **St John First Aid Volunteer**.

## RNSH DATA ANALYSIS AND SURGICAL OUTCOMES (DASO) UNIT UPDATE

Maria Albania, Manager

### RECENT APPOINTMENTS



Since the last update the RNSH DASO Unit has helped recruit another **two data managers** - **Susan O'Donnell** and **Sharon Cheng**. **Susan** is the Interventional Neuroradiology Data Manager. Her roles include **tracking and analysing the activity and workload of the INR team**, while also assisting with the **Endovascular Clot Retrieval**

**service optimisation project**. Her previous expertise is in database administration and database development/programming roles in both Ireland and Australia. More specifically, in **designing, installing and supporting databases**, as well as **managing database backup and recovery processes**.



**Sharon** is the **Cardiothoracic Surgery Data Manager** and her role is to manage all data processes required for RNSH participation in the Australian and New Zealand Society of Cardiac and Thoracic Surgeons Database Program. Sharon has over 10 years work experience at Prince of Wales Hospital in data and health information management (HIM) roles.

Her expertise includes **clinical coding, data management, theatre activity reporting, key performance indicators and data collection** for the pilot acute surgery project at Prince of Wales.

### REDCap at RNSH

Research Electronic Data Capture (REDCap) is a **web-based application** developed by Vanderbilt University **to capture data for clinical research and create databases and projects**. World-wide the use of REDCap has proliferated since its establishment and at the beginning of this year REDCap was installed at and made accessible to RNSH (thanks to the persistence and hard work of Dr Matthew Doane).

Currently **62% of registered RNSH REDCap users are from the Division of Surgery and Anaesthesia**. Given the growing popularity of REDCap, the DASO Unit in collaboration with the Sydney Informatics Hub at University of Sydney organised a 3 hour introductory REDCap training workshop. The workshop held in August and instructed by David Jung - Sydney Informatics Hub Digital Research Officer, was a success and was at full capacity. The DASO Unit will be organising a follow up advanced REDCap training session at a later date, together with a demonstration on how REDCap is being

used within our surgical departments. Anyone wanting more information about REDCap or how they might get access to this should email [NSLHD-RNS-DASOUnit@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:NSLHD-RNS-DASOUnit@health.nsw.gov.au).



### COMING UP IN THE NEXT THREE MONTHS

- ✓ Promotional videos showcasing surgical champions at RNSH
- ✓ The SERT Institute and DASO Unit will unveil bio-statistical support service for surgeons
- ✓ Refurbishment and opening of a dedicated Academic Surgical Clinic

## CONTACT US

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