Contact Us

RPA INSTITUTE OF ACADEMIC SURGERY

Winter 2020

The uncertainty surrounding COVID-19 as well as social distancing significantly impacted on the activity in our facilities for most of March to May.

This slowing came as an opportunity for our academic surgeons, allowing them to dedicate more time to their research.

With the lockdown came many changes to our daily business including the ways in which we undertake research and provide training and education and care to our patients.

This included:

- Surgeons consulting rooms were moved online
- Moving meetings including MDT's online
- Providing take home training models

Taking our meetings online has allowed for those who aren't able to make a campus meeting to dial in and join the discussion. We saw an increase in our attendance allowing more people to get involved.

In Memoriam - Dr Robert Ogle

In April RPA lost a well-respected and beloved colleague; Dr Robert Ogle.

Dr Ogle was a world renowned specialist in maternal-foetal medicine and clinical genetics. He was the Clinical Director for Women's Health, Neonatology and Paediatrics for the Sydney Local Health District (SLHD).

Dr Ogle was passionate about clinical research, in particular for pre-exlampsia in women, and was pivotal in establishing the 0.5 FTE academic position for benign gynaecology in the IAS.

He dedicated much of his career to providing teaching to students, caring for his patients and a strong passion for achieving equity for our more vulnerable community members.

We thank him for everything he did for the RPA community. He will be dearly missed by all, our thoughts are with his family.

WELCOME

ROSA FUNG

We would like to warmly welcome Ms. Rosa Fung who is the acting Facility Coordinator for the IAS. Rosa joins us on a secondment from JL Theatres where she has been a leader in cardiothoracic surgery as a scrub nurse.

Rosa brings a wealth of knowledge from her years working in theatres as well as her ongoing research in surgical education and educational design.

We are excited to have Rosa as part of the team and are looking forward to the big ideas she brings with her.

CONGRATULATIONS

200 CRS & HIPEC

Congratulations to all those involved in the peritonectomy program at RPA who have now completed 200 cases since the program started in 2017.

Ms SARAH O'SHANNASSY

IAS Advanced GI Program Manager, Sarah O'Shannassy has completed her Masters of Philosophy (MPhil)

Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) Grant

Congratulations to Dr Ronda Farrell and some of the Peritonectomy team who were award a MRFF grant.
The funding is to support the HyNOVA study which is a randomised study comparing Hyperthermic and Normothermic intraperitoneal chemotherapy following interval cytoreductive surgery for stage III epithelial ovarian, fallopian tube and primary peritoneal cancer.

PROFESSOR JANE YOUNG

IAS Executive Director of Research, Professor Jane Young has been newly appointed as the Director of Academic Career Development for Public Health within the Faculty of Medicine and Heath at the University of Sydney.

Congratulations Professor Young on your appointment.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Activity at the IAS is still not at normal capacity due to the COVID-19 restrictions but in recent weeks we have seen a number of smaller teaching groups commence ensuring they are maintaining social distancing.

We have implemented a number of measures to continue to support our staff and students with their research and education including take home suture kits and online education resources on the moodle platform.

3D printing continues to be a very active area with a number of departments engaging with our surgical innovations research officer, Kai Cheng to implement this technology into their research.

A number of think tanks as well as our new ideas and new protocols meeting have been moved online to ZOOM which has been well received by all as more people than usual have been able to attend.

We are planning to continue to provide an online video dial in option for all meetings as this has enabled many people to access the meetings than normal.

Take Home Suture Kits

Assoc. Professor David Storey has developed take home suture kits for JMOs to purchase.

The kits include a number of suturing items for the students to practice their suturing skills while the facility has been unavailable for use.

The packs sold out in the first few days of being offered but we have been able to make more for those interested.

Please contact us directly if you're interested in purchasing a pack.

Sydney Robotics Summit 2020

The Sydney Robotics Summit (SRS) 2020 program has been postponed to Friday 11 and Saturday 12 June 2021.

The SRS are collaborating with Society of Robotic Surgery to host the Australian program as part of the World Robotics Symposium which will be held online on 1 August 2020.

For more information about the Australian program or to register visit the Sydney Robotics Summit website or subscribe to updates below.

World Robotic Symposium Registration

IAS Podcasts

The IAS podcast series Timeout has commenced recording.

Podcast topics will be focused around treatment pathways for a variety of surgical procedures as well as advice from surgeons on career progression and academic surgery.

Please let us know any topics you would like us to focus on.

Moodle Training

Dr Nipu Jayatilleke, Assoc. Professor Jonathan Hong and Dr Sarah Whereat have developed programs and curriculum for online teaching being delivered via the moodle platform.

The program allows for students to be able to continue to learn and was developed as a way to provide training remotely as a response to COVID-19 and the lack of face to face surgical training and education.

Urology Surgical Skills Training

The RPA Urology department hosted a junior registrar teaching session at the IAS in July. This was the first urology hands-on course with great attendance by the junior doctors on the urology rotation, as well as other residents with a particular interest in urology.

Assoc. Professor Storey has done a great job with the urology models. Dr Scott Leslie who assisted with the organisation of the course mentioned that these courses work really well thanks to the effort Assoc. Professor Storey has put into making the models so accurate anatomically, life-like and usable in a practical setting.

The stations included:

- Cystoscopy / pyeloscopy to retrieve a kidney stone
- Uretero-ureteral anastomosis
- Uretero-ileal anastomosis (conduit)
- DRE - enlarged prostate with prostate cancer at the right base

Dr Leslie said having used and had a practice training on these models, "they are very realistic, and reflect how we perform these procedures in real life".

This course would not have been possible without Assoc. Professor Storey and the rest of the IAS Education team including Dr Sarah Wehereat, Dr Nipu Jayatilleke, Dr Jean Wong and Rosa Fung.

Also thank you to Dr Eisinger who came to help out with the session.

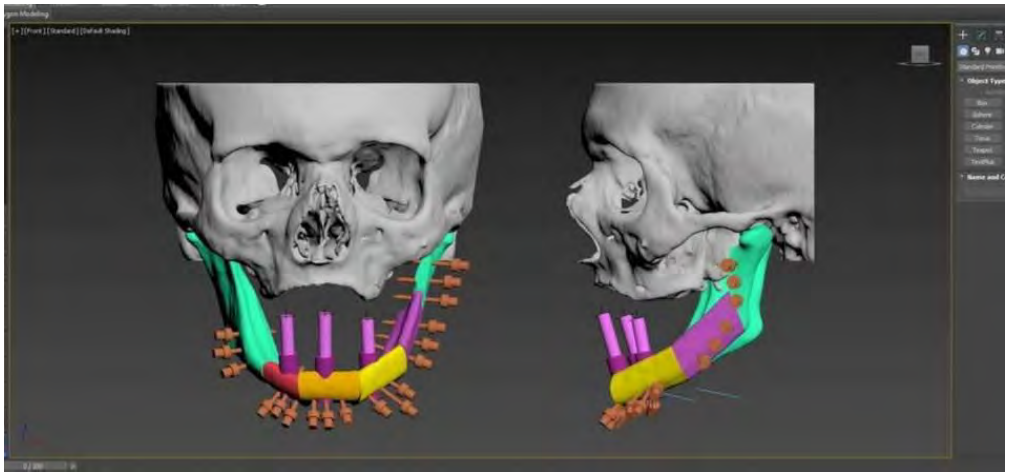
INNOVATIONS

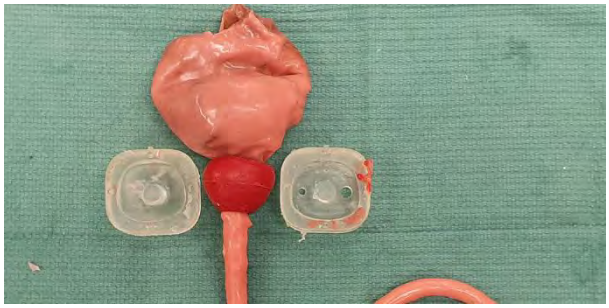
3D Printing

Surgical Innovations Research Officer, Kai Cheng has been working with a number of departments and research groups during the pandemic to get cutting guides and plates designed and printed.

Kai Cheng worked with Prof Jonathan Clark, Dr David Leinkram, Dr Dale Howes and Dr Narayana Subramaniam on a Type IV complex mandible reconstruction with vascularized free fibula flap using Virtual Surgical planning and SLA 3D printing using Surgical Guide Resin.

This project is displayed in the images below.





Kai has also worked with Assoc. Professor David Storey on a training model for Digital Rectal Exam (DRE) for prostate cancer using 3D printing and silicone rubber casting and moulding. The model can be seen in the image on the left.

DEPARTMENT SPOTLIGHT

RPA ORTHOPAEDIC DEPARTMENT

The **Department Spotlight** is a new e-updates feature, which was added to highlight the outstanding work being undertaken across our surgical departments within RPA.

The first department under the spotlight is the **Orthopaedic Department** at RPA.

We sat down with one of the Orthopaedic Department's VMO and IAS academic research lead, **Dr Brett Fritsch** to find out more about his career in orthopaedic surgery and his role as the research lead.

Tell us about your department:

It's rather unique in that it provides surgical care to more than 1,600 inpatients and 14,000 outpatients annually with injuries, conditions and diseases of the musculoskeletal system being treated in the trauma, emergency and planned setting.

The department works with Institute of Rheumatology and Orthopaedics (IRO), Chris O'Brien Lifehouse, Institute for Musculoskeletal Health (IMH) and The University of Sydney.

The department has 10 surgical consultants including head of department; Dr Mark Horsley, Research Leads Dr Brett Fritsch and Professor Ian Harris and Education Lead, Dr Jeffrey Petchel.

The department has significant expertise across the orthopaedic spectrum including the sarcoma (bone cancer) program. Associate Professor Paul Stalley is one of the main surgeons in Australia treating these cases, with RPA being the leading centre in NSW providing surgery for patients with sarcoma, including patients undergoing pelvic exenteration.

The Orthopaedic department is also part of the SLHD surgical robotics program providing robotic surgery for patients undergoing knee and hip reconstructions and replacements. A number of research projects within the department are supported by the Orthopaedic Research Officer Mr Sascha Karunaratne. The main focus of the research program is in joint arthroplasty where projects are supported by over $250,000 in research grants.

The department has published research and presented findings at international conferences regarding the five principal areas of practice: robotic surgery, lower limb replacement, sarcoma, upper limb surgeries and foot and ankle surgery.

Orthopaedic surgery at RPA includes:

- Sarcoma
- Total robotic knee surgery
- Knee and hip replacements
- Emergency orthopaedic surgery

The department has a special interest in the following areas of research:

- Robotic assisted orthopaedic surgery
- Sarcoma surgery
- Lower limb replacement
- Decision-making in knee replacement
- Upper limb surgery
- Foot & ankle surgery

The department is well supported by a range of health professionals and administrative staff. Through the collaborative effort of all staff involved, the department is able to deliver a high quality of care to their patients.

What made you want to be a surgeon and why did you choose to specialise in orthopaedics?

I have always had an interested in science, technology, and competition, and Orthopaedics seemed to be a great combination of all three. Surgery appealed because of its direct, practical application of science in a way that actually benefited people.

I grew up on a farm in a small rural community, and my dad was always making things, and fixing things, and being very resourceful in applying his knowledge in a practical way to achieve the best possible results from imperfect situations where a lot remains outside your control (like the weather), and the little I knew of surgery at the time seemed to be a good way to do the same thing (but with a more stable income and a lot easier than farming!).

I was a keen sportsman when I was younger, and Orthopaedics deals with a lot of sports injuries, which appealed, and it has a particular personality that suited me. When I was in year 10 doing physiotherapy as work experience we went to a talk in a nearby town by a visiting Orthopaedic surgeon. I was impressed by the talk, and at the end of the talk I went up to him and told him I thought his job was what I wanted to do when I finished school. When he told me "...That's great, but you won't be able to do it" it really sealed the deal. I knew then that I would be an Orthopaedic surgeon.

Why is research in surgery important?

Because if you don't measure it, you can't improve it. Research is simply diligently reviewing what we think is correct, and actually measuring if it is. It is then taking what we learn, adding some creativity, basic science, and clear thinking, and applying it to improving the treatment for the next set of patients. Without it what we think we know is just an opinion, but with proper research we can turn it from opinion to fact and move the field forward safely, efficiently, and most effectively.

Best advice from your mentor?

If you can't measure it, you can't improve it.

A memorable highlight in your career so far?

In the early stages simply getting selected onto the Orthopaedic Training program was pretty memorable (my wife steaming open the letter, reading it, and resealing it before I got home shows how keen we were to know if I'd made it on), as was passing the Fellowship exam (as I had left my wife in hospital a day after the birth of our first child to go to Melbourne to sit the exam made it quite important that I actually passed first go).

Being selected as a Sports Fellow to spend a year at Duke University in the US doing a high volume of surgery, research, and flying around on their private jet looking after their basketball and football teams, was a highlight for my whole family.

More recently being selected as one of 3 surgeons from Australasia to travel through Europe as an ESSKA-APKASS travelling fellow was another real highlight. Spending 4 weeks visiting some of the best Orthopaedic research and clinical centres across Europe with some brilliant co-fellows, sharing ideas, and forming friendships that have already led to several collaborative projects and positions on committees and research groups in Europe, the US and ISAKOS was one of the best things Ive done in my career so far.

Best advice you would give someone wanting to study surgery/medicine?

Go for it. It's a great profession, and is only going to get more interesting as we start to really apply data to it. To that end my practical advice would be to do a combined degree in medicine and engineering.

For the last thousand years or so doctors have done what they *think* has been the best thing to do, but those days are coming to an end. In the age of data we will start doing what we *know* is the best thing to do, as driven by the data (and indeed we will only be able to do what we can prove is the best thing to do). The better you can understand data, and the ways to use it, the better the doctor you will be.

IN THE NEWS

Laser Printed Sheilds

Head of Anaesthetics, Dr Michael Paleologos featured on a Today Show segment about a group

from the University of Sydney who had been working with laser cutters and printers to develop face shields for those fighting COVID-19 on the front line.

Dr Paleologos was filmed here at the IAS talking about how working with these researchers has allowed for these products to be developed in a timely manner to help with the fight against COVID-19.

To view story please see video link below.

WATCH VIDEO

GRANT INFORMATION

Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI) Research Grant Scheme 2020

The ACI research grants scheme 'targets the design, evaluation and implementation of innovative models of patient care'. Applications are now open. For more information about eligiblility or to apply visit the link below.

More Information

Published Articles

Recently published articles from RPA Surgeons and Departments

Evolving experience of operating theatre staff with the implementation of robotic-assisted surgery in the public sector
Daniel Steffens, Kate E. McBride, Rachael Roberts, Paul G. Bannon and Michael J. Solomon
Australian Health Review
May 2020

Distributive justice during the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic in Australia
Oliver Fisher, Kilian GM Brown, David Coker, Kate E McBride, Daniel Steffens, Cherry E Koh and Charbel Sandroussi
ANZ Journal of Surgery
May 2020

Liver resection as a component of en-bloc multivisceral resection for upper abdominal tumors is associated with increased morbidity

Morris PD, Coker D, Crawford M, Yeo D, Sandroussi C.
Journal of Surgical Oncology
January 2020

Quality of Life After Cytoreductive Surgery and Hyperthermic Intraperitoneal Chemotherapy: Early Results from a Prospective Cohort Study of 115 Patients
Daniel Steffens, Cherry Koh, Nabila Ansari, Michael Solomon, Kilian Brown, Kate McBride, Jane Young, Christopher Young and Brendan Moran
Annals of Surgical Oncology
April 2020

A Machine-Based Approach to Preoperatively Identify Patients With the Most and Least Benefit Associated With Resection for Intrahepatic Cholangiocarcinoma: An International Multi-institutional Analysis of 1146 Patients
Carlo Pulitano
Annals Surgical Oncology

Simultaneous Pelvic Exenteration and Liver Resection for Primary Rectal Cancer With Synchronous Liver Metastases: Results From the PelvEx Collaborative
Colorectal Disease
Pelvex Collaboration

Aid to safe transfer of the vascular pedicle to the neck using a saline-filled Penrose drain
A Ogunbowale, **J Clark**, R Gaikwad, L Stassen, C Barry
British Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery
April 2020

Squamous Cell Carcinoma of the Oral Tongue in Young Patients: Outcomes and Implications for Treatment
Narayana Subramaniam, Deepak Balasubramanian,Tsu-Hui Hubert Low, Sivakumar Vidhyadharan, Anjali Menon, Samskruthi Murthy, Krishnakumar Thankappan, Jonathan R. Clark, Kan Gao and Subramania Iyer
Indian Journal of Surgical Oncology
February 2020

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on surgical services: early experiences at a nominated COVID-19 centre
Kate McBride, Kilian Brown, Oliver Fisher, Daniel Steffens, David Yeo, Cherry Koh.
ANZ Journal of Surgery
April 2020

Oral competence following facial nerve paralysis: Functional and quality of life measures
Jonathan S. Y. Hong, Kilian G. M. Brown, Jacob Waller; Christopher J Young; Michael J Solomon

Techniques in Coloproctology
DOI: 10.1007/s10151-020-02274-x

The role of MRI pelvimetry in predicting technical difficulty and outcomes of open and minimally invasive total mesorectal excision: a systematic review
Jonathan S. Y. Hong, Kilian G. M. Brown, Jacob Waller; Christopher J Young; Michael J Solomon
Techniques in Coloproctology
DOI: 10.1007/s10151-020-02274-x

ASO author reflections: Quality of life trajectories after cytoreductive surgery and hyperthermic intraperitoneal chemotherapy
Daniel Steffens and Brendan Moran
Annals of Surgical Oncology
April 2020

The effect of personality traits and decision-making style on post-operative quality of life and distress in patients undergoing pelvic exenteration
David J. Coker, Cherry E. Koh, Daniel Steffens, Kenneth Vuong, Jane M. Young, Michael J. Solomon.
Colorectal Disease
May 2020