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AUTUMN 2021

Since February, we have resumed smaller COVID safe training sessions, with a number of departments engaging with the facility to run simulations, surgical skills trainings and to use a number of the unique bespoke training models being made in-house.

We have a number of new programs and events being held this year, which we are looking forward to including the 'Under the lights' series, revamped robotics summit and more educational webinars. With the roll out of the COVID vaccination now underway we are hoping, like everyone, that things will soon start to return back to life as we once knew it.

IN THE NEWS

PROFESSOR JONATHAN CLARK AM

Professor Jonathan Clark AM is a Head and Neck Surgeon who holds many titles including Director of Head and Neck Research, Lang Walker Family Foundation Chair in Head and Neck Cancer Reconstructive Surgery as well as being the newly appointed Director of Translational Research here at the IAS.

Professor Clark is a familiar face to the IAS team as he has been working closely with IAS Surgical Innovations Research Officer, Kai Cheng and Assoc. Professor Payal Mukherjee for a number of years now, looking into 3D printing in surgical planning.

We are privileged to have Professor Clark's expertise and leadership joining our executive. He brings world class research knowledge and expertise.



We would also like to congratulate Professor Clark who was awarded a \$3.75 million Translational Program Grant from the Cancer Institute NSW.

The grant for head and neck research was awarded to Professor Clark and a number of other researchers from around the campus and NSW to gain a 'deeper understanding of the complex biology of this diverse group of cancers.

Find out more about the grant [here](#).

ANAESTHETIC RESEARCH

We would like to warmly welcome University of Sydney's Nuffield Chair of Anaesthetics, Professor Robert Sanders and postdoctoral research associates, Dr Jennifer Taylor and Dr Jordan Wehrman. It is great to have an anesthetic research presence on the campus to increase collaboration in research across specialties.

Under Professor Sanders leadership the group will be working on two major projects;

1. The pathological overlap of delirium and dementia
2. The mechanisms of consciousness and sensory disconnection

For anyone interested in engaging in anaesthetic research please get in touch via our email [here](#)

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

As part of International Women's Day celebrated on Monday 8 March, we partnered up with MDOK program at RPA to promote the views and opinions of female surgeons who provided invaluable teaching, guidance and research at the IAS.

Breast, Endocrine and General Surgeon, Dr Nipu Jayatilleke said "to me, leadership is transformational; when I get a seat at the table, I have the responsibility to make space and invite others to join me.

"I want the next generation of surgeons to see me, a woman, person of colour, a migrant, a mother, and a surgeon, and realise that not only does modern surgery look like me, but that there is a space in surgery for everyone.

ENT Surgeon and research lead ENT Surgery, Assoc. Professor Payal Mukherjee is a strong advocate for women in surgery and promotes this, particularly through her role as the Chair of RACS NSW. Assoc. Professor Mukherjee said she 'has witnessed firsthand, last year, the pivotal role our female leader in health have played in keeping NSW safe'.

She said "it is now my mission to minimise the barriers for the next generation of female leaders in surgery so they can have more impact, and faster".

Colorectal Surgeon, Assoc. Professor Cherry Koh was interviewed by Women's Agenda and featured in an article titled 'Meet the trailblazers reshaping surgery in Australia'.

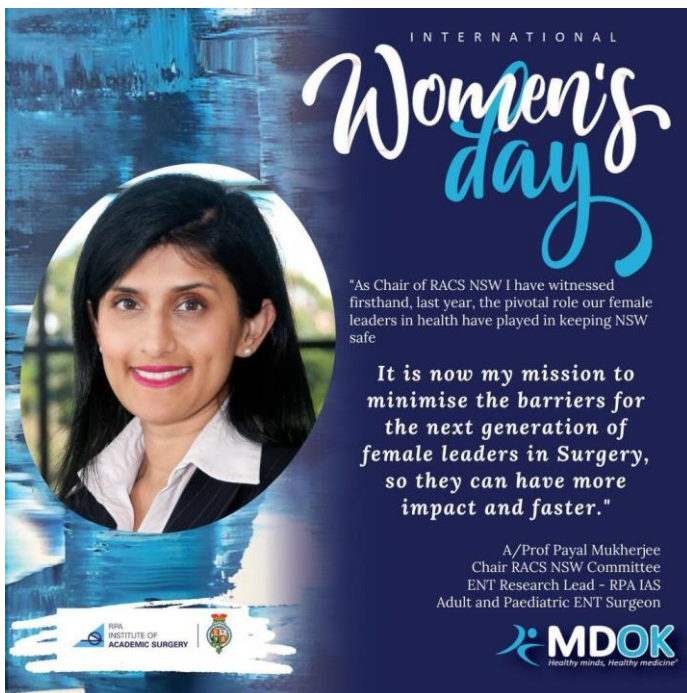
Assoc. Professor Koh has been fundamental in promoting and supporting women in surgery, explaining to Women's Agenda; "it will take more women in positions of power to break the glass ceiling once and for all". Assoc. Professor Koh explains she's been exposed to 'unconscious biases in surgery' and during her study, since becoming a consultant she has certainly shown us how to do it all; having just completed her PhD, whilst raising two children and running a full clinical practice.

The IAS believes it is very important to encourage and support women in surgery. Although the numbers in

medical school have almost gender parity, surgery is very under represented, with only 11% of surgeons, female.

It is great to see our female surgeons advocating and being a voice to help change this gap and ensure that we continue to promote surgery for all.

[Click here](#) to read the Women's Agenda article in full.



INTERNATIONAL
Women's day

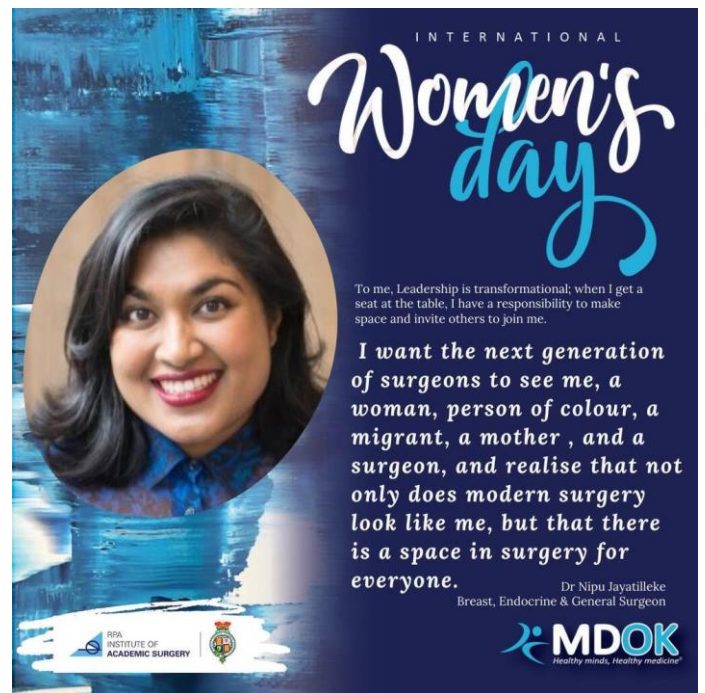
"As Chair of RACS NSW I have witnessed firsthand, last year, the pivotal role our female leaders in health have played in keeping NSW safe

It is now my mission to minimise the barriers for the next generation of female leaders in Surgery, so they can have more impact and faster."

A/Prof Payal Mukherjee
Chair RACS NSW Committee
ENT Research Lead - RPA IAS
Adult and Paediatric ENT Surgeon

RPA INSTITUTE OF ACADEMIC SURGERY

MDOK
Healthy minds, Healthy medicine



INTERNATIONAL
Women's day

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Dr Nipu Jayatilake
Breast, Endocrine & General Surgeon

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GENDER PARITY IN THE PUBLIC HOSPITAL MEDICAL WORKFORCE

As part of NSW Women's Week, Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) NSW State Committee, Chaired by Assoc. Professor Payal Mukherjee hosted a panel discussion focusing on 'gender parity in the public hospital medical workforce' at NSW Parliament House on Friday 12 March.

The panel included Sydney Local Health District Chief Executive, Dr Teresa Anderson AM and IAS Co-Chair Professor Paul Bannon, along with NSW Secretary of Health, Elizabeth Koff.

This is an important topic, particularly for surgery with only 11% of surgeons being female, there is a long way to go in improving this figure. It was great to see a mix of leaders within health joining the discussion to ensure we are taking the right action now to changing this statistic for future generations.



SURGICAL EDUCATION & TRAINING

UPCOMING EVENTS

IAS WEBINARS

We have a number of IAS webinars coming up including:

- **The Evolution of a Research Idea**
Wednesday 17 March 12:30 - 1:30PM

Colleen Mendes (Stomal Therapy CNC) and Dr Greg Fairbrother (Patient and Family Centred Care Research Nurse Consultant) will discuss their experiences in being part of a multi-centre trial.

- **Nursing research Insight from Professionals**
Wednesday 24 March 12:30 - 1:30PM

Experienced researcher, Dr Vicki Patton (Nurse Manager, AGISNP) and newcomer, Susan Virtue (Transplant Coordinator, CNC) will be comparing experiences of having to conduct research in a clinical environment and how to juggle it all.

A number of webinars from April onwards will be locked in shortly. Please fill in the expression of interest forms below to nominate any webinars you would be interested in attending and we will keep you updated.

[IAS WEBINAR SERIES](#)

[EXPRESSION OF INTEREST](#)

UNDER THE LIGHTS

PART ONE: THE DEBRIEF - MAY 2021
PART TWO: THE DEBATE - SEPTEMBER 2021



UNDER THE LIGHTS IS A NEW TWO PART SERIES ENCOURAGING SURGICAL TEAM CRITICAL & ANALYTICAL THINKING.

FIND OUT MORE

THE DEBRIEF - Friday 21 May 2021

The RPA Institute of Academic Surgery invites surgical teams to present a highly unique surgical case: when put under the lights, it was one that involved key collaboration between specialties and disciplines, and the utilisation of research and critical thinking to influence the patients' treatment plan.

*The updated submission date is **21 April 2021***

Entry criteria and submission information can be found [here](#)

Register for event [here](#)

SURGICAL ROBOTICS & INNOVATIONS SUMMIT

The Sydney Robotics Summit program has been extended to include surgical innovations such as 3D printing and other innovative technologies and devices.

This year's program will be held online across three weeks from 7 June and include debates, panel discussions, masterclasses and lecture series.

For more information about this program or to find out about our face-to-face program being held in June 2022 please visit the [website](#).

JMO Be Well Webinar

MDOK is presenting at the JMO Be Well Webinar. This is a great opportunity to hear about the success of this program and the extent of the wellbeing initiatives under MDOK, SLHD.

There are a number of webinars being run by Ministry of Health, [click here](#) to register.

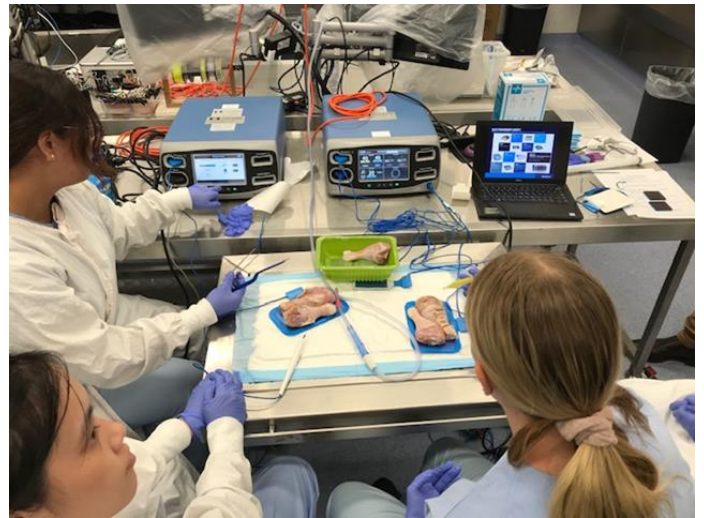
SURGICAL EDUCATION UPDATE

Surgical skills sessions recommenced on 16 February with COVID safe practices continuing. Most sessions are fully booked. The sessions are being attended by both SRMO through to medical students, catering for a mix of standard surgical skills along with specialty focused training. The first specialty session which covered Neuro trauma was well received.

A new, exciting program being hosted and run by the IAS is the 'Orientation of the new Scout and Scrub Graduate Nurses'. This program commenced on Monday 22 February and has been a great way to introduce these new operating theatre nurses to the clinical environment.

The well received program has included skills and simulation training. The new graduates spent a full two weeks in the IAS facility and a number of days in operating theatres. They are now attending the IAS one day a week for 6 weeks to provide a comprehensive transition to Operating Theatres, ensuring they are comfortable with the environment and making it a easier transition from being a student to nurse.

We have also seen an increase in the number of visitors to the skills laboratory over the last few months with awareness growing of the innovative training models and educational projects within the facility.



Above: The new Scout and Scrub Graduate Nurses' utilising the surgical skills laboratory and simulation theatre as part of their orientation.

SYDNEY UNIVESRITY SURGICAL SOCIETY (SUSS) SUTURE KITS

SUSS have developed suture packs for students looking to practice their suturing. These packs can be purchased by medical students through their website. Visit their website for more information [here](#)

INSIGHT FROM MEDICAL STUDENT ON THEIR ELECTIVE AT IAS

Final year medical student, Jenny Zheng has spent the last two months with the IAS working with Assoc.

Professor David Storey and Dr Sarah Whereat creating inanimate training models including creating silicon skin, episiotomy models and vessels, while working on a several projects as part of her elective.

Due to COVID restrictions on international travel, Jenny was unable to travel to Shanghai, China for an elective at Fudan University as originally planned, and instead had to find another option a little closer to home.

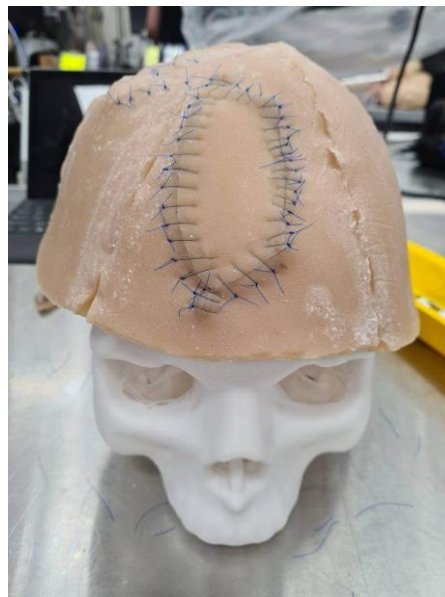
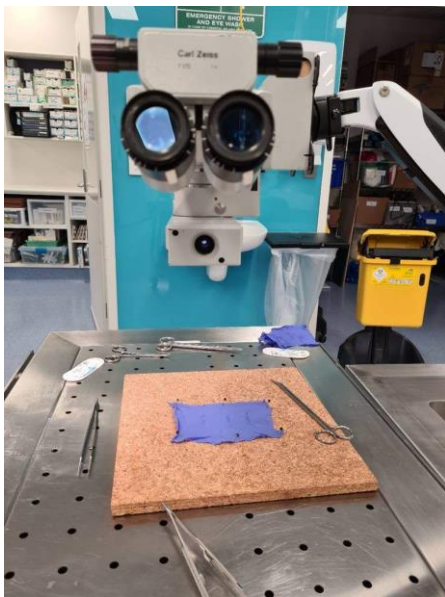
Jenny had previous experience and exposure to surgical education at IAS through Sydney University Surgical Society (SUSS) suturing workshops, the Golden Scalpel Games and had also attended a Summer Surgical Program at the end of 2019 at Nepean Hospital.

Jenny said, 'I was originally interested in a clinical placement for my elective but found an interest in the work being done at the IAS.' Prior to commencing her elective Jenny 'had no idea about the model making process', but it was something that interested her as she was keen to specialise in plastic surgery.

Although she had no idea what her elective would entail, she said 'it's been great to learn about surgical education and have the opportunity to practice surgical techniques in safe environment, where you can make mistakes with no consequences. Being the only student has allowed for me to build great relationships with Prof Storey and Dr Whereat and get a better understanding and insight into the application process and potential future hurdles with getting onto a training program'.

Jenny reiterated that it's been a great hands on elective and great to be able to get an understanding of the training, education and research support available at the IAS.

Below are some models Jenny assisted in making during her elective at the IAS.



MOODLE LEARNING

Join hundreds of other students online by signing up to the **Fundamentals of Surgical Skills** located on the Moodle Platform.

Our surgical podcast '**TIMEOUT**' is now located on this platform with new podcasts covering a variety of surgical topics released fortnightly.



Contact us [here](#) to gain access to this invaluable educational resource.

DEPARTMENT SPOTLIGHT

RPA NEUROSURGERY DEPARTMENT

Recently appointment Head of Department for Neurosurgery, Dr Jeffrey Brennan gave us a small insight into his career so far including why he chose to go down the path of being a neurosurgeon as well as his thoughts towards the challenges facing surgery over the coming years.

Dr Brennan is an Australian neurosurgeon who has subspecialised in disorders of the spine, brain tumours, and cerebrovascular disease.

He is involved in the teaching of junior neurosurgeons and holds the position of Supervisor of Advanced Training for the RACS Surgical Education and Training Program in neurosurgery at RPA hospital.

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

The department of neurosurgery provides a comprehensive range of surgical treatment for patients with acute and chronic conditions affecting the neurological system. The team of six neurosurgeons undertake more than 1,000 operations and deliver care to more than 400 ambulatory care patients annually.

The department's achievements include:

- having the first intraoperative MRI in Australia
- Supporting the RPA endovascular clot retrieval (ECR) service for acute ischaemic stroke in NSW
- providing the only neurosurgical service with dedicated interventional neuroradiology (INR) capacity.

How long have you been working at RPA?

20 years

Why did you study to become a surgeon?

Out of medical school I thought of medical training in either haemtaology or nephrology. Surgery was not really on the radar until I started work as an intern and became attracted to the more immediate and personal way that surgeons are able to treat their patients.

Surgery also offers a direct way of helping and potentially solving problems once and for all, and my initial attraction was to orthopaedic surgery for this reason. It was also something as a junior doctor that was tangible and made sense with immediate goals that were achievable by direct action.

Why did you choose to specialise in neurosurgery?

Neurosurgery was almost an afterthought. I think most people have a fundamental interest in the brain - the thing that makes us who we are. After completing some JMO terms I became fascinated by the complex and intricate nature of the surgery involved.

There is also a high degree of drama for time critical events that for a junior doctor can be very intoxicating: the

opportunity to turn certain death into a chance for life by the direct use of your own hands. Of course, maturity and experience reveals almost the exact opposite - neurosurgery can be one of the most unforgiving and humbling undertakings I can think of. One thing led to another and I found myself on the neurosurgery training program.

What was the best part about being a surgeon?

Directly doing something is very rewarding. People like and gain satisfaction from achievements from their own labour eg. their garden, DIY renovations or art work. Surgeons get to feel this same satisfaction when treating their patients by the very nature of their craft. It can be very rewarding to help someone in such a direct and tactile way.

A memorable career highlight?

It's the little things, rather than any one event. A few that stand out are receiving the certificate of outstanding service from the Royal College of Australasian Surgeons (RACS), being nominated for Australian of the Year, general contribution to registrar training as an examiner, and now as Head of Department. I find teaching very rewarding and the week by week reward of helping people.

Best advice for someone wanting to study surgery/medicine?

To be a good surgeon first you need to be a good doctor - learn to listen to people and focus on the basics. Also, training is a long process - it's not necessary to do it all at once. The journey has to be as or more important than the destination so take your time, don't feel you have to be around 24/7, work on basic skills, and don't give up!

If you didn't become a surgeon what job do you think you would have done?

Theoretical physics? If I hadn't done an Anatomy/Physiology major in my BSc I would have looked at Mathematics/Physics.

Favourite thing to do in your spare time?

Exercising (running and bush walking) - I have a rather healthy (or unhealthy) interest in wine, especially French, and enjoy adding to my collection and sharing with friends.

Pre-pandemic I enjoyed overseas travel, now I am enjoying the highlights of NSW when I can.

What do you see as being the biggest change/impact to surgery over the next 5-10 years?

Technically - significant technological advances eg. robotics in spine surgery and cranial neurosurgery, and fast changing knowledge eg. in neuro-oncology. This is driven by looking for better ways to treat the individual patient but carries the downside of huge increases in the cost of service provision.

Ethically - this increase in costs runs the risk of driving neurosurgery further and further into the realm of being a first world luxury. How to meet the right balance between trying to improve outcomes for the individual but maintain an equity across all of health economics will be more and more challenging.

Professionally - keeping up with the increasing amount and immediacy of communication. Telehealth has amplified this with online accessibility multiplying workloads. It can be difficult to stay on top of things.

Personally - the difficulties with increasing competition for time: and the need to try and maintain some work-life balance and avoid burn out. This has always been an issue but it seems that simultaneously there are more administrative demands on surgeons on top of the clinical load and an increasing climate of expectation/desire to being involved more at home and in the community: something has to give.

SURGICAL RESEARCH

PUBLISHED ARTICLES, CHAPTERS & ABSTRACTS

Recently published articles from RPA Surgeons and Departments

Title: A phase I, non-randomised controlled trial demonstrating the novel technique of cytoreductive surgery and hyperthermic intraperitoneal chemotherapy utilising warm humidified carbon dioxide insufflation

Authors: Celine Garrett, Daniel Steffens, Nabila Ansari, Cherry Koh.

Publication: Colorectal Disease

Date: February 2021

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/codi.15588>

Title: Detailed cost of robotic-assisted surgery in the Australian public health sector: from implementation to a multi-specialty caseload

Authors: McBride K, Steffens D, Stanislaus C, Solomon M, Anderson T, Thanigasalam R, Leslie S, Bannon PG

Publication: BMC Health Services Research

Date: February 2021

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-021-06105-z>

Title: Surgical experience for patients with serious mental illness: a qualitative study

Authors: McBride KE, Solomon MJ, Lambert T, O'Shannassy S, Yates C, Isbester J, Glozier N.

Publication: BMC Psychiatry

Date: February 2021

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-021-03056-x>

Title: Validation of the American Joint Committee on Cancer Staging in Squamous Cell Carcinoma of the Vermilion Lip

Authors: Yung AE, Que MS, Lo S, Aggarwal S, Hong AM, Tin MM, Clark JR, Gupta R, Ch'ng S

Publication: Annals Journal of Surgical Oncology

Date: January 2021

DOI: [10.1245/s10434-020-09431-4](https://doi.org/10.1245/s10434-020-09431-4)

Title: ASO Author Reflections: Quality of Life and Survival Outcomes in Elderly Patients Undergoing Pelvic Exenteration.

Authors: Raha Alahmadi, Michael Solomon, Daniel Steffens

Publication: Annals of Surgical Oncology

Date: February 2021

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1245/s10434-021-09759-5>

Title: Elderly Patients Have Better Quality of Life but Worse Survival Following Pelvic Exenteration: A 25-Year Single Center Experience

Authors: Raha Alahmadi, Daniel Steffens, Michael Solomon, Peter Lee, Kirk Austin, Cherry Koh

Publication: Annals of Surgical Oncology

Date: February 2021

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1245/s10434-021-09685-6>

Title: Complete resection of the iliac vascular system during pelvic exenteration: An evolving surgical approach to lateral compartment excision

Authors: Saissan Rajendran, Kilian Brown, Michael Solomon, Kirk Austin, Peter Lee, David Robinson, Daniel Steffens

Publication: British Journal of Surgery

Date: January 2021

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/bjs.9915>

Title: Feasibility and acceptability of a preoperative exercise program for patients undergoing major cancer surgery: Results from a pilot randomised controlled trial. Pilot and Feasibility Studies.

Authors: Daniel Steffens, Jane Young, Paula R Beckenkamp, James Ratcliffe, Freya Rubie, Nabila Ansari, Neil Pillinger, Cherry Koh, Phillip A. Munoz, Michael Solomon.

Publication: *Pilot Feasibility Study*

Date: January 2021

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40814-021-00765-8>

Title: Survival outcomes following modern multidisciplinary management of oral squamous cell carcinoma in Australia

Authors: Timothy P.J. Liu, Bradley M. Fisher, Benjamin Chua, Jonathan R. Clark, Tsu-Hui (Hubert) Low, Martin D. Batstone

Publication: Oral Surgery, Oral Medicine, Oral Pathology and Oral Radiology

Date: 2021

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oooo.2020.09.012>

Title: How I do it: Occlusal-based planning for dental rehabilitation following segmental resection of the mandible and maxilla

Authors: Leinkram, D., Wykes, J., Palme, C., Deshpande, S., McLaughlin, M., Garg, P., Wallace, C., Howes, D. and Clark, J.R.

Publication: ANZ Journal of Surgery

Date: November 2020

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/ans.16441>

Title: Transoral robotic free flap inset in oropharyngeal cancer

Authors: Haymerle, G, Charters, EK, Froggatt, C, Wykes, J, Palme, CE, Clark, JR.

Publication: Clinical Otolaryngology

Date: December 2020

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/coa.13696>

Title: Young age is not a predictor of disease specific survival in oral cancer: A multi-institutional study

Authors: Lawrence J. Oh, Laveniya Satgunaseelan, Rebecca Asher, Michael Veness, Robert Smee, David Goldstein, N. Gopalakrishna Iyer, Deepak Balasubramanian, Hubert Low, Carsten E. Palme, Ruta Gupta, Jonathan R. Clark

Publication: Oral Oncology

Date: February 2021

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oraloncology.2020.105162>

Title: Assessment of an evidence-based laryngeal cancer fact sheet: a mixed methods study

Authors: Jabbour J, Shepherd HL, Beddow T, Sundaresan P, Milross C, Palme CE, Clark JR, Dhillon HM

Publication: Journal of Health Informatics

Date: January 2021

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1460458221989403>

Title: To Sling or Not to Sling? Impact of Intraoperative Sling Procedures During Radical Prostatectomy on Postoperative Continence Outcomes: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis.

Authors: Eunice Lim, Scott Leslie, Ruban Thanigasalam, Daniel Steffens

Publication: BJUI Compass

Date: January 2021

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/bco2.67>

Title: Plasma Ion Implantation of 3D printed PEEK creates optimal host conditions for bone ongrowth and mineralisation

Authors: Kruse, HV, McKenzie, DR, Clark, JR, Suchowerska, N.

Publication: Plasma Processes and Polymers

Date: January 2021

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/ppap.202000219>

Title: Oligometastases in head and neck carcinoma and their impact on management

Authors: Mat Lazim, N., Elliott, M., Wykes, J. and Clark, J.

Publication: ANZ Journal of Surgery

Date: February 2021

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/ans.16622>

Title: Maxillofacial reconstruction with prefabricated prelaminated osseous free flaps

Authors: Diab, J., Leinkram, D., Wykes, J., Cheng, K., Wallace, C., Howes, D., Singh, J., Palme, C. and Clark, J

Publication: ANZ Journal of Surgery

Date: February 2021

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/ans.16541>

Title: Research outcomes following uterus transplantations at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital

Authors: Dana Georgevsky, Dr Ying Li, A/Prof Kate Wyburn, A/Prof Selvan Pather,

A/Prof Trevor Tejada-Berges, Dr David Robinson, A/Prof Jerome Laurence,

Dr Neil Campbell, Dr Keith Liyanagama, Dr Rajit Narayan, Dr Tracey Lutz, Dr Agnes Chan,

Sally-Ann Heaney, Dr Yu Xuan Kitzing, A/Prof Lyndal Anderson, Dr Giuliano Testa,

Dr Liza Johannesson and Dr Anthony Marren

Publication: Transplant Journal of Australasia

Date: December 2020

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.33235/tja.29.3.10-13>

Abstracts accepted for presentation:

2021 ASC

Preet G. S. Makker, Cherry E. Koh, Michael J. Solomon, James Ratcliffe, Daniel Steffens. Functional outcomes following pelvic exenteration: Results from a prospective cohort study

Olivia Fox, Kadja Benicio, Michael Solomon, Jane Young, Cherry Koh, Peter Lee, Kirk Austin, Sophie Hatcher, Daniel Steffens. Would the distance between place of residence and treating hospital affect surgical outcomes and survival in patients undergoing major pelvic cancer surgery?

Other:

Magazine: PRIORITY TRIAL featured at the [APA inmotion magazine](#) (pages 54/55)

Radio Interview: [2BG Health Living Podcast](#)

From: 14 minutes, 40minutes, Assoc. Professor Sanjay Warriar

Topic: Discussing Breast Implant-Associated ALCL (Anaplastic Large Cell Lymphoma) with host Sally Cockburn.

Podcast Interview: [Brilliant Brains & Beautiful Minds by Melanie Burnicle](#)

Assoc. Professor Sanjay Warriar

Radio Interview: [Huge breakthrough': Australian and Indian researchers develop 3D printed ear](#)
Assoc. Professor Payal Mukherjee
SBS Hindi

RPA Institute of Academic Surgery is part of the Sydney Local Health District and works in partnership with the University of Sydney.



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