

RCPA Retired Fellows Foundation Newsletter 2015

From the RCPA Foundation Chairman - Prof Graeme Suthers

On behalf of the Foundation Board we wish you all seasons' greetings and well for the future year. I am proud along with my fellow Board Members to bring you the inaugural RCPA Retired Fellows Newsletter and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all our Foundation Grant and Award Winners this year 2015. The College has continued to receive support from the Fellowship through donations at the time of subscription renewal in June each year. We have also received a major donation from an anonymous philanthropic organisation for immediate dispersal.

We were also pleased to receive a personal donation from a Fellow to establish the Roger Crouch Prize in ophthalmic pathology, a gesture which reflects the Fellow's personal enthusiasm for a topic as well as respect for a mentor. We have continuing support from the Kanematsu Foundation, Novo Nordisk, and Mike & Carole Ralston; we value the vision of such supporters.

As result, we had the largest range of awards on offer in 2015, with values ranging from \$1000 to \$50,000. We received 41 applications and granted 9 awards. The number of applications was encouraging as it reflects the awareness among trainees and recent Fellows of the importance of research and further training in Pathology. As a Board we look forward to building the financial resources of the Foundation so that we can help more of the next generation of pathologists and scientists.

If you feel you have a role to play please either email Eve Propper evep@rcpa.edu.au or call Eve direct on 02 8356 5806.

All RCPA Foundation information can also be found on the College website at:
<https://www.rcpa.edu.au/About/RCPA-Foundation>

We congratulate our Award and Grant winners, and we provide further insights into some of our winners:

- **Postgraduate Research Fellowship:** Dr Andrew Colebatch, Dr Cheng Liu, and Dr Yee-May Ling
- **Travel Grant:** Dr Marcus Dabner
- **Research Grant-in-Aid:** Dr James Knox
- **Kanematsu/Novo-Nordisk Research Award:** Dr Freda Passam
- **Mike and Carole Ralston Travelling Fellowship:** Dr Aaron Schlosberg
- **Research Fellowship:** Dr Cameron Snell
- **Roger Crouch Award for Ophthalmic Pathology Publication:** Dr Nicole Sladden



Travel Grant: **Dr Marcus Dabner**

It is an honour to be a recipient of an RCPA Foundation Travel Grant. I am spending 12 months in the UK undertaking an Honorary Fellowship, focusing on developing further skills in Neuropathology, Haematopathology and Molecular Pathology, primarily based at the Institute of Neurology/National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery and University College London Hospital. I have also had the opportunity to be involved in research within a highly active research department, and to teach medical students and registrars, including visitors from a number of other countries. I am taking the opportunity to attend a number of courses in the UK and Europe while here, and it has so far been an extremely fulfilling and rewarding experience. The assistance from the RCPA Foundation has been extremely helpful in enabling me to develop further skills which will allow me to contribute more to our profession when I return to Australia and I thank the Fellows, the RCPA Foundation and St John of God Pathology for their support.



Grant in Aid: **Dr James Knox**

The World Health Organisation has identified antibiotic-resistant bacteria as a major public health threat globally. In a follow-up study to our previous work using mass-spectrometry for detection of carbapenemase-producing Gram-negative bacteria, I plan to trial a variety of assay modifications. I am very grateful to the RCPA Foundation for the Research Grant-in-Aid for 2015. Through this award, the RCPA Foundation will be supporting the goal of developing more accurate diagnostics for routine detection of these important pathogens in the clinical microbiology laboratory.



Kanematsu/Novo-Nordisk Research Award: **Dr Freda Passam**

As a haematologist I am struck by the frequency of blood clots causing diseases such as heart attack, stroke and venous thrombosis. New anticlotting medicines are being developed day by day however they are still limited by a high incidence of recurrent clotting and the side effect of bleeding. I believe the opportunity to further the knowledge base in the complex area of thrombosis will lead to the discovery of more effective and safer anticlotting agents with the potential to help an unquantifiable number of people. This is the primary ideal of the RCPA Foundation in awarding the Kanematsu Novo Nordisk grant. This ideal also represents the prime motivation for my involvement in thrombosis research. For the last 8 years I have been studying the disulfide bond patterns in clotting proteins and how these are regulated by a group of enzymes named thiol isomerases. With the RCPA Kanematsu Novo Nordisk Award I will study the effect of thiol isomerases on the disulfide bond patterns of the platelet's main receptor: the fibrinogen receptor. I will also examine if inhibition of thiol isomerases is an effective way of preventing platelets to bind fibrinogen and clot. Understanding the mechanism of platelet activation by thiol isomerases will facilitate the design of novel antithrombotics targeting these enzymes.



Mike and Carole Ralston Travelling Fellowship: **Dr Aaron Schlosberg**

As the recipient of the Mike and Carole Ralston Travelling Fellowship I am currently undertaking research at the University of Cambridge Metabolic Research Laboratories with a focus on the transcriptomics of food-intake regulation in the hypothalamus. My work is in the domain of bioinformatics and our goal is to develop computational models allowing for comparison and prediction of gene expression profiles as measured by disparate platforms. As the greatest contributors to disease burden in Australia, obesity and poor diet are of the utmost concern, and the techniques that I am learning will allow me to return home with the ability to work at the frontiers of precision medicine. This year abroad would not have been possible without the generous support of the RCPA Foundation Awards, for which I am most sincerely indebted.



The RCPA Foundation Research Fellowship: **Dr Cameron Snell**

This research project is designed to interrogate binding partners of the oestrogen receptor (ER) in order to establish a test that may predict the response to endocrine therapy in breast cancer. Many women are treated with endocrine therapies for ER-positive breast cancer, yet receive little clinical benefit and suffer significant side effects. Receiving this award has been extremely important, and provides the basis for developing assays and assembling the retrospective cohort of patients. The project involves the collaboration of several units at the Mater Hospital, including Mater Pathology, the Mater Research Institute and the Mater Cancer Care Centre to provide a multidisciplinary approach to solving this problem. It is hoped that this work will provide the basis for a future prospective trial that will prove the efficacy of this test. Ultimately this will allow for endocrine therapies to be targeted to women that will benefit them, and allow others to pursue more beneficial treatments, including clinical trials, treatments designed to overcome endocrine therapy resistance and chemotherapy.

