CENTRE FOR HEALTH ECONOMICS RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

CREST newsletter

JUNE 2025

In this edition:

Inequalities in Cancer Care | P1
TROG Update | P2
TOGA update | P3
AGITG update | P4
CREST update | P5
CST update | P6
ANZGOG update | P7
BCT update | P8
COST Measure | P9
COGNO update | P9
ANZUP update | P10
ANZSA update | P11
Other events | P12

Economic Evaluations of Interventions Addressing Inequalities in Cancer Care

Health equity considerations are highly regarded among the attributes relevant to decision-making and priority setting, as a gap in the distribution of health outcomes persists even in developed countries like Australia. However, the systematic inclusion of health equity in this context has not been consistent, resulting in likely suboptimal funding in terms of the distribution of health outcomes.

This has been acknowledged by Cancer Australia, which notes that achieving health equity in cancer outcomes is one of the strategic objectives outlined in the latest Australian Cancer Plan, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at its heart.[1] This is evident in the disparities that exist in cancer incidence and outcomes, including survival, across groups based on socioeconomic and cultural characteristics.

The recently published systematic review by Merga et al. (2025) offers insights into how cancer care can help address these disparities and how it has been evaluated in the context of cost-effectiveness analysis.[2] They found that equity considerations included in the economic evaluations were mainly related to racial/ethnic (46.6%) and socioeconomic status (30%), with the most prevalent cancer types studied being colorectal (30%) and breast (23.3%) cancers. In terms of the intervention type, the analyses were primarily focused on cancer screening, specifically introducing or expanding services (27%) and enhancing participation (60%). Much less explored in the studies included were interventions that reduce risk factors (such as a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages or smoking cessation services), diagnostic strategies, or treatment options. Although it was suggested that smoking cessation, navigator-based screening, and reminder systems were the interventions most commonly deemed as value for money, most studies applied traditional cost-effectiveness methods to equity-relevant subgroups. This approach is limited as it does not consider trade-offs between equity and efficiency at a societal level, including societies' preferences for equality (also known as inequality aversion).[1] In contrast, only four studies employed distributional cost-effectiveness analysis, which addresses these issues. Further work is needed to determine what interventions reduce health inequities while optimising efficiency.

If you are thinking of including health equity considerations in your trial and economic evaluation, please reach out to CREST for assistance. More information on these methods can be found on the CREST factsheet: 'Including health equity considerations in economic evaluations'.

Contributed by:
Antonio Ahumada Canale



[1] https://www.australiancancerplan.gov.au/
[2] Merga BT, McCaffrey N, Robinson S, Turi E, Lal A. Economic Evaluations of Interventions Addressing Inequalities in Cancer Care: A Systematic Review. Value Health. 2025 Feb;28(2):306-318.
[3] Cookson R, Griffin S, Norheim OF, Culyer AJ, Chalkidou K. Distributional Cost-Effectiveness Analysis Comes of Age. Value Health. 2021 Jan;24(1):118-120.

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The Trans-Tasman Radiation Oncology Group (TROG)

Clinical trials day celebrations

TROG members and staff marked Clinical Trials Day on 20 May 2025 with a range of colourful celebrations, highlighting the crucial value of clinical trials to advance medical science, including in the area of radiation therapy.

Since TROG's inception in 1989, we have been involved in more than 115 clinical trials involving more than 15,500 participants from Australia, New Zealand and globally.

We shared resources about clinical trials with our 28 Facility Alliance Members, and many marked the day with celebratory events for staff and to help educate consumers about clinical trials.

TROG Ambassador Program: help us advance our mission

We recently launched the **TROG Ambassador Program**, an initiative aimed at engaging passionate individuals to champion our mission of improving treatment and outcomes for those affected by cancer.

TROG is inviting people from diverse backgrounds – including survivors, advocates, healthcare professionals, researchers, media personalities, and community leaders – to join us as volunteers in raising awareness, inspiring action and fostering community support for our groundbreaking clinical trials and research.

Find out more about becoming a TROG Ambassador

Two grants to progress innovative trials in brain and lung cancer

We're thrilled that a trial of a novel imaging modality aimed at reducing radiation therapy side effects for patients with lung cancer is set to progress, after receiving a $1.86m National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) grant in May.



TROG CEO Ms Susan Goode promoting Clinical Trials Day

Congratulations to Prof Paul Keall from the Image X Institute at the University of Sydney and the research team working on the VITaL (Ventilation Imaging to reduce Toxicity for patients with Lung cancer) trial, which will investigate use of an imaging modality called Computed Tomography (CT) ventilation imaging, pioneered by the Image X Institute.

Another innovative trial aimed at improving outcomes for patients with brain metastases will progress to the next stage, after receiving a $120,000 grant from the Mark Hughes Foundation (MHF) Centre for Brain Research.

The TROG 23.02 SMART trial led Dr Neda Haghighi from Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre will explore whether giving one dose or three smaller doses of stereotactic radiosurgery prior to surgery provides better outcomes for patients with brain metastases.

TROG ASM Champions Inclusivity and Innovation

With a theme of inclusivity and innovation, the TROG Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) in March 2025 brought together more than 310 researchers, health professionals and consumers from across Australia and New Zealand with the common goal of advancing cancer care through vital research.



TROG President A/Prof Puma Sundaresan at the ASM

The ASM program saw more than 65 speakers share their expertise and learnings on current TROG trials, new research opportunities and the latest radiation oncology research developments.

A record number of consumers joined us for the meeting, as we focused on ways to boost inclusivity, access and consumer collaboration in clinical trials.

The winners of the 2025 TROG Research Excellence Awards were announced at the Gala Dinner, where delegates got in the spirit of the 80s Neon theme. See our photo gallery.

SAVE THE DATE: TROG 2026 ASM
17-20 March 2026, Melbourne, Victoria

Join our stunning coastal fundraiser trek

Are you ready to make a difference with us? Join our third annual Trek4TROG, a stunning adventure along the beautiful NSW Far South Coast. TROG CEO, Susan Goode, is already on board, and we'd love for you to be part of it too!

- **When:** 30 October – 2 November 2025
- **Where:** 30km, 3-day hike on the far South Coast of NSW, starting from Merimbula
- **Places:** Strictly limited spots: Sign up now

Find our more or support the trek team

TROG CANCER RESEARCH

Thoracic Oncology Group Australia (TOGA)

Professors Solomon and Pavlakis Secure Landmark $14.7 Million Funding for Groundbreaking Lung Cancer Liquid Biopsy Trial



Professor Ben Solomon (CIA) and Professor Nick Pavlakis (CIB)

Prof Ben Solomon and **Nick Pavlakis**, renowned leaders in lung cancer research, have secured a landmark **$14,707,962** in funding for the **"ASPiRATION-2 Liquid"** (ASPiRATION 2L) clinical trial in the Medical Research Future Fund 2022 Frontier Health and Medical Research grant opportunity.

This pioneering project, in collaboration with University of Sydney and University of Melbourne, will place Australia at the forefront of global precision medicine by evaluating the use of serial liquid biopsies to revolutionise personalised lung cancer treatment.

Over the last decade, NSCLC treatment has been transformed by the discovery of several genomic mutations that drive tumour growth, and the development of targeted therapies to specifically target that mutation.

For patients with these forms of mutation-driven advanced stage NSCLC (oncogene-addicted NSCLC), treatment has changed from empirical treatments, such as chemotherapy, to daily tablets taken from home with tolerable side effects.

People that can be treated with these drugs have survived more than 10 years living with metastatic NSCLC. However, resistance to these targeted therapies is inevitable.

The ASPiRATION 2L study: Addressing resistance to targeted therapies

The ASPiRATION 2L trial, led by Chief Investigators Prof Ben Solomon (CIA) and Prof Nick Pavlakis (CIB), alongside a national team of esteemed researchers, will evaluate the use of serial liquid biopsies (sampling the blood to detect circulating tumour DNA (ctDNA)) to guide treatment decisions for 500 patients with advanced oncogene-addicted NSCLC that has become resistant to therapy.

Determining the tumour genomic profile that gives rise to resistance is an active area of research, but to date has relied on sampling tumour tissue through invasive tissue biopsy.

Resistance to earlier generation targeted therapies arose primarily through escape variants of the mutation driving tumour growth, but as targeted therapies have become more sophisticated, there is a growing body of evidence, including TOGA's ALKTERNATE and OSCILLATE clinical trials, suggesting that resistance is now also dependent on co-mutations that constantly evolve during the course of treatment.

"The ASPiRATION-2L trial presents a unique opportunity to redefine personalised medicine for lung cancer using liquid biopsy with ctDNA to guide treatment decisions, not just at the time of diagnosis, but throughout the patient journey." - Prof Ben Solomon

The significance of ASPiRATION 2L

Lung cancer remains the leading cause of cancer death in Australia and worldwide. The ability to identify actionable gene alterations in tumour tissue has led to the development of highly effective targeted therapies, improving patient outcomes and reducing side effects. However, obtaining tumour tissue for subsequent treatment decisions can be challenging, often requiring invasive and potentially painful biopsies.

The ASPiRATION 2L trial will address this critical gap by evaluating the use of liquid biopsies, a simple blood test that can be repeated throughout a patient's treatment. This approach, available through remote testing to every Australian with advanced oncogene-addicted NSCLC showing resistance to TKIs, offers a less invasive and more accessible method for monitoring tumour evolution and guiding treatment adjustments, ultimately enhancing patient care. Moreover, ASPiRATION2L enables lung cancer to lead the genomics revolution in cancer care, with the potential to bring significant changes in survival and quality of life.

TOGA
Thoracic Oncology Group Australasia

Australasian Gastro-Intestinal Trials Group (AGITG)



Prof Jeanne Tie presented DYNAMIC-III preliminary findings at ASCO 2025

AGITG at ASCO 2025

At the 2025 ASCO Meeting, three AGITG studies and one endorsed study were presented. Congratulations to the study teams of DYNAMIC-III, NEO-IMPACT, STOPNET and CHALLENGE.

The DYNAMIC-III trial compared treatment informed by ctDNA results to standard care for patients with stage III colon cancer. Primary analysis of the ctDNA-positive cohort was presented in the Oral Abstracts Session. The study found that patients who tested positive for ctDNA after surgery have a high risk of recurrence after adjuvant therapy, and that the use of ctDNA-informed treatment escalation does not reduce risk of recurrence for these patients. View the DYNAMIC-III abstract

NEO-IMPACT is the first to report outcomes from the addition of immunotherapy to chemotherapy prior to surgery for patients with resectable and borderline resectable pancreatic cancer. Preliminary results were presented at the poster session and showed that this approach may be beneficial for patients at this stage of cancer and a larger, more definitive randomised study is encouraged. View the NEO-IMPACT abstract

The STOPNET trial was also presented as a poster this year. Opening in 2024, this NETs study is investigating the cessation of somatostatin analogues for patients who have commenced radiotherapy. View the STOPNET abstract



CHALLENGE is an AGITG endorsed study presented at ASCO as part of the Clinical Science Symposium. The study found that a 3-year structured exercise program initiated shortly after completion of adjuvant chemotherapy improved disease-free survival, overall survival, patient-reported physical functioning, and health-related fitness for patients with colon cancer. View the CHALLENGE abstract

Neo-POLEM trial for colon cancer now open

We are thrilled to announce that Neo-POLEM is now open and recruiting at their first site in South Australia, coordinated by the AGITG Clinical Research Centre. The phase II trial is exploring the efficacy of PD1-Vaxx, which has shown a preliminary promising response for lung cancer and is hoped to have a similar response for tumours with defective mismatch repair. Learn more about Neo-POLEM

Idea Generation Workshop for Early-Phase Study Designs

Our eighth annual Idea Generation Workshop saw five ideas on early-phase study designs presented. Thank you to presenters, attendees and our convenors, Dr Charlotte Lemech and Dr Abhijit Pal for another successful Workshop. Read the recap.

27th Annual Scientific Meeting, 24-27 November 2025, Tarntanya/Adelaide

Early bird registration is now open, along with opportunities to be involved in the region's leading GI oncology conference. Don't miss this discounted price, and join us for:

- an all-star panel of international faculty,
- the chance for your abstract in the program, including publication in the *Asia-Pacific Journal of Clinical Oncology*,
- the always-popular New Concepts Symposium, where delegates can present embryonic new ideas for discussion with the audience,
- a bevy of awards to recognise a range of work and disciplines in GI cancer care and research.

This year's theme of *Transforming Trials through Collaboration* highlights the significance of collaborating for greater global impact, such as reducing barriers for patients to join clinical research studies. Register for early-bird tickets

Russell Conley Anal Cancer Grant

We are pleased to announce a one-off anal cancer grant in memory of Russell Conley. Russell was AGITG's Chief Executive Officer for 22 years, until he passed away in November 2024 from anal and rectal cancer. Up to $50,000 will be awarded to a research project that drives new knowledge in anal cancer and/or raises awareness of the disease. Apply now

Now available: 2024 Annual Report

We invite you to read our proud achievements throughout 2024. Read the Annual Report

Stay up to date with AGITG

Follow us on LinkedIn for more updates.

AGITG
AUSTRALASIAN GASTRO-INTESTINAL TRIALS GROUP

CREST Updates

CREST Consumer Workshop: A consumer's guide to health economics in cancer research

On Friday, 27 June, CREST will host a **free, face-to-face** consumer workshop at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). This workshop offers a valuable opportunity for consumers and community representatives to gain insight into the role of health economics in cancer clinical trials. We will also cover how decision-makers use data collected within clinical trials to shape healthcare. More details below:

Workshop name: A consumer's guide to health economics in cancer research
Date: Friday, 27 June 2025
Time: 9 AM – 4 PM AEST
Location: University of Technology Sydney (UTS) – Room CB01.25.025

More information and registration



Structured Training Opportunity

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/online sessions available

Find out more here.



Health Economics Audit - Do you need one?

Are you currently working on a concept or protocol and unsure if/how health economics should be included?

View this simple checklist to help you determine if you need input from CREST.

Checklist

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

Cancer Symptoms Trials (CST)

PaCCSC & CST Research Forum 2025

The Science Behind the Art of Care: Clinical Trials in Cancer Symptoms and Palliative Care

The 2025 PaCCSC & CST Research Forum celebrated research, collaboration, and community — setting the stage for new partnerships and innovations in palliative care and cancer symptom management.

The Forum was a vibrant celebration of collaboration, innovation, and community spirit. Over two inspiring days, we welcomed researchers, clinicians, consumers, and advocates from across Australia and around the world to explore the latest in cancer symptom management and palliative care research.

Held in a single-stream format to encourage connection, the Forum attracted 137 delegates, including international guests from the USA, UK, Japan, New Zealand, and Singapore. With a strong focus on collaboration and consumer engagement, it was a space where every voice — from early-career researchers to lived-experience advocates – played a vital role.

Showcasing research and consumer experiences

Research was front and centre at the Forum — alongside powerful contributions from consumers and carers, whose lived experiences shaped conversations throughout the program.

A total of 25 abstracts were presented, with six delivered as oral presentations and 19 as posters. Topics spanned cancer symptom management, palliative care approaches, and innovative clinical trials, reflecting the depth and diversity of work happening across the sector.

"Participation in clinical trials can provide hope and purpose for people with advanced cancer and palliative care needs." — Jessica Lee

Having a single stream meant no one missed out, and discussions flowed



Discussion panel (left to right) - Peter Spolc, Prof Zoe McQuilten, Prof William Dale, Prof Catherine Walshe, Prof Steve Pantilat

naturally between research presentations, consumer-led sessions, and collaborative panels.

Inspiring conversations

We were honoured to welcome three outstanding keynote speakers to the Forum.

Professor William Dale, Dr Steven Pantilat, and Professor Catherine Walshe shared their expertise, insights, and global perspectives, inspiring delegates to think differently about innovation, collaboration, and patient-centred research.

Reflecting on the power of partnership in research and care, William and Steve reminded us of the importance of being part of a team by quoting respected peers:

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."
- Professor William Dale, Geriatrician

"Work with people you like, or even love." – Professor Steve Pantilat, Palliative Care Physician and Researcher

Their presentations sparked important conversations across the two days and set a powerful tone for the Forum's commitment to advancing care through research and community voices.

"Where there's uncertainty, we must explore what and how to do it." – Professor Catherine Walshe, Palliative Care Nurse and Researcher

We were also privileged to hear from a diverse group of researchers, clinicians, and consumer advocates who shared their work and perspectives across oral presentations, posters, and panel discussions. Their contributions made the forum a genuine celebration of innovation, collaboration and shared lived experience.

Consumers at the Centre

Consumer voices were woven throughout the Forum, reflecting our commitment to genuine partnership and respect for lived experience in research. The Forum achieved Cancer Voices Australia's 'Consumers Included' status, recognising the meaningful integration of consumers in both planning and program delivery. Read more.

Supporting access – Regional travel grants

Cancer Symptom Trials (CST) awarded two $1,000 travel grants to support regional health professionals to attend. Donna Brown and Meg Harrison's participation added valuable perspectives to the Forum. Read Donna and Meg's reflections on the forum.

Celebrating excellence - CST Emerging Trialist Award

This CST Emerging Trialist Award recognises rising stars in cancer symptom research, and this year's deserving winner was **Dr Aaron Wong** from the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre.

Dr Wong's work impressed the review panel with its innovation, impact, and real-world relevance. His achievement reflects the incredible talent and dedication of the next generation of researchers helping to drive the field forward.



Dr Aaron K Wong, CST Emerging Trialist 2024

UTS Cancer Symptom Trials (CST)

Australia New Zealand Gynaecological Oncology Group (ANZGOG)

A united call to transform gynaecological cancer care: Introducing the Gynaecological Cancer Transformation Initiative

The recently released **Gynaecological Cancer Transformation Initiative (GCTI)** is a bold, national plan to dramatically improve outcomes for women affected by gynaecological cancers in Australia.

Developed over many months of collaboration, the GCTI has been led by **ANZGOG**, with collaborative partners **Ovarian Cancer Australia**, the **Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation**, and other leading organisations, clinical and pre-clinical researchers, and women with lived experience.

This once-in-a-generation initiative aims to **revolutionise the way we diagnose, treat, and care for women with gynaecological cancer**.

Our collective vision is clear: **equitable access to world-class healthcare that improves quality of life and survival for every woman affected by a gynaecological cancer, saving the lives of more than 30,000 Australian women with gynaecological cancer over the next decade alone.**

The GCTI brings together three interdependent pillars:

- **The woman's journey:** enabling access to personalised treatment, better survival, and specialist supportive care.
- **The clinical team:** ensuring timely care driven by the latest research, technology and data.
- **The research community:** building a coordinated research framework to fast-track new treatment options from lab to clinic.

The initiative proposes a national approach that includes:

- **Expanding access to molecular profiling and precision medicine** – personalising diagnosis and treatment and moving away from a one-size-fits-all approach.
- **Enhancing clinical team capability across Australia including regional and remote areas** – access to the latest research, knowledge, treatment and care options
- **National gynaecological cancers data portal and virtual biobank** – facilitating access to samples and information for research
- **Transforming gynaecological cancer research** – increased drug repurposing studies and innovative clinical trials with a focus on new medicines and approaches to treatment
- **Improved access to specialist supportive care** - closing critical gaps in emotional and mental health support
- **Robust governance and implementation** - coordinating a national approach for long-term impact
- To bring this ambitious vision to life, we're calling on the Australian Government to commit **$100 million over four years**, this includes funding from its strategically aligned Medical Research Future Fund programs.

To support this call, we've launched underfunded.org.au – a public-facing campaign inviting all Australians to sign an open letter urging the Government to act. **Over 7,000 people have already added their names**, sending a clear message: enough is enough – women with gynaecological cancer deserve better.

Watch the video to hear from ANZGOG's inspiring community volunteers, who gave their time and passion to deliver a powerful call to action for the GCTI.



Idea Generation Workshops

ANZGOG is holding three Idea Generation Workshops with its Tumour Working Groups (TWG) on 24 October 2025 at Rydges Hotel, Sydney Airport. Early career researchers are especially encouraged to bring their ideas for development and support. The TWG will help develop ideas during the session and may recommend a working party to progress them further if needed.

Experienced researchers are also welcome to present new or more developed concepts for discussion and potential fast-tracking to the Research Advisory Committee.

Ideas can incorporate any area of gynaecological cancer research; surgical, medical, and radiation oncology, translational research, causes, prevention, and treatment of gynaecological cancers, quality of life and symptom benefit studies.

Workshops are open to ANZGOG members only. To join, complete the online membership form here.

There will be a call out for Ideas and Concept submissions in August 2025. If you have any further questions, please contact: **John Andrews**
ANZGOG Research Manager
john.andrews@anzgog.org.au

ANZGOG 2026 ASM – Save the Date!

We are very excited to announce that the ANZGOG 2026 Annual Scientific Meeting will be held at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre, Queensland, from Wednesday 25 March to Friday 27 March 2026.

This year's committee is chaired by A/Prof Emma Allanson, with Dr Kate Webber as deputy chair. International keynote speakers, conference theme, call for abstracts and early bird registration deadline will be confirmed in August.



ANZ GOG | Advancing research saving lives

Breast Cancer Trials (BCT)



Breast Cancer Trials 46th Annual Scientific Meeting

Registration is open for the Breast Cancer Trials' (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.

The ASM 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.

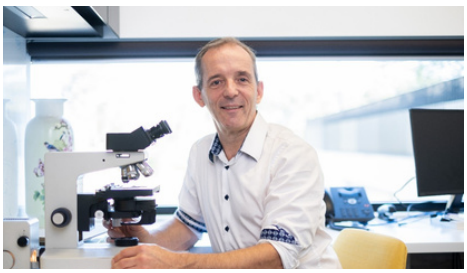
As part of the program, trainees in radiation oncology, medical oncology and surgical oncology are invited to participate in a workshop on Saturday 26 July. This is a free multidisciplinary session, with both presentations and MDT panel discussions from leading Australian and international breast cancer 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 https://bct2025.org/

The FINER Trial Research Results – Extending Cancer Control in ER+ HER2- Breast Cancer

Findings from the FINER clinical trial were announced at the American Society of Clinical Oncology conference held in Chicago.

Results have shown that the addition of the drug ipatasertib to standard treatment with fulvestrant significantly extends the period of cancer control for people with oestrogen receptor-positive (ER+) and HER2-negative metastatic breast cancer.



Associate Professor Andrew Redfern, Study Chair of the FINER Clinical Trial

The FINER trial, conducted by Breast Cancer Trials in partnership with the Canadian Cancer Trials Group, enrolled 250 participants whose cancers had progressed following CDK4/6 inhibitor therapy.

The study found that adding ipatasertib to fulvestrant tripled the median time before cancer progression, from 1.94 months to 5.32 months, with even more favorable results (5.45 months) in patients who had detectable AKT pathway mutations.

"This treatment is an exciting next step for patients with metastatic breast cancer, providing the benefits of longer cancer control which will hopefully translate into a longer and healthier life," said Associate Professor Andrew Redfern, Study Chair of the FINER trial.

"It could potentially help up to 1,500 people in Australia every year who are diagnosed with this type of breast cancer, offering a new treatment option for these patients."

To find out more, click here.

The DIAmOND Trial Research Results – A Promising Step for HER2-Positive Cancers

Results from the DIAmOND clinical trial have shown that adding dual immunotherapy to existing treatments could be promising for selected women and men with advanced HER2-positive breast cancer.

The DIAmOND study was developed by Australian researchers and is a world-first clinical investigation into whether giving patients dual immunotherapy, in combination with drug Trastuzumab (commonly known as Herceptin), can prolong the duration of cancer control in patients with advanced HER2-positive breast cancer that has become resistant to trastuzumab.

Immunotherapy drugs like durvalumab and tremelimumab, as used in this study, assist the body's natural immune system to attack cancer cells. The combination of these two drugs has been given previously to people with lung cancer, but this is the first clinical trial that has tested the combination of these two drugs in people with breast cancer.

"These promising results suggest combining new immunotherapy treatments with trastuzumab may offer a new treatment option for patients with treatment-resistant HER2-positive breast cancer," Professor Loi explained.

"These findings provide a compelling case for further exploration and how we can best integrate this treatment combination into clinical practice."

Professor Sherene Loi developed and led the DIAmOND clinical trial and presented the results at the recent ESMO Breast Cancer Congress 2025. Read more.



Professor Sherene Loi, Study Chair of the DIAmOND Clinical Trial

BREAST CANCER TRIALS

Validation of the COmprehensive Score for Financial Toxicity (COST) Measure in an Australian Sample

The financial impact of cancer can mean patients are forced to spend less on basic needs, sell assets or take on debt to cope with ongoing costs of treatment. Approximately 45% of patients continue to face financial burden even after completion of cancer treatment. This can have an effect on a patient's psychological health, treatment adherence and overall quality of life.

The 11-item COmprehensive Score for Financial Toxicity (COST) measure was developed to measure financial impacts experienced by cancer patients in the United States (US). The COST tool generates a total score, which ranges from 0 to 44, with lower scores indicating a greater cancer-related financial impact. Given the difference in the healthcare system between the US and Australia, there is a need to assess whether this tool is valid for Australian patients.

In a 2 Phase mixed-methods study, Kim et al tested the validity of the COST tool for the Australian setting using semi-structured interviews and surveys (Phase I) and field testing (Phase II). The tool was found to be a valid and reliable measure of financial impact that was overall relevant and representative of the experiences of Australian cancer patients. The study also led to the addition of four items that were deemed important and relevant for the Australian context. Two of these items were related to family-related financial concerns, and two stand-alone items were related to respondents' knowledge of financial assistance services and income support to facilitate clinical action. The stand-alone items are intended to be used in conjunction with the summative financial impact scores to facilitate the provision of information on available services or financial support when information gaps exist. This is particularly relevant given most Australian oncologists address treatment expenses with fewer than half of their patients, despite recognising their importance.

The COST was found to be a valid and reliable measure for Australian cancer patients. The Australian version contains two new family-related items to enhance its content coverage to reflect the experiences of Australian cancer patients i.e., the Australian-COST. Completion of the two stand-alone items may help to better link patients with existing financial assistance services and income support that are available in Australia when information gaps may exist.

Contributed by: Lutfun Hossain

For further information see B. Kim, C. Rutherford, L. Lehane, J. Fethney, L. Acret, T. King, et al. (2025), Cross-Cultural Validation of the COmprehensive Score for Financial Toxicity (COST) Measure in an Australian Sample, Cancer Med 2025 Vol. 14 Issue 6 Pages e70779, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40125650

Cooperative Trials Group for Neuro-Oncology (COGNO)



COGNO's 17th Annual Scientific Meeting – New Horizons, Novel Therapies

Our **17th COGNO Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM)** is fast approaching.

Join us from Sunday 14th September to Tuesday 16th September 2025 at the Langham Hotel on the Gold Coast.

Hosted by Co-Convenors Dr Kate Cuff and Prof Mark Pinkham, this year's meeting will explore cutting-edge advances and future directions in neuro-oncology. Our theme, "New Horizons, Novel Therapies" reflects our shared commitment to advancing clinical trials, research and treatment in brain cancer.

You'll have the opportunity to hear from prominent international neuro-oncology experts, including:

- **Prof. Katy Peters** (Neuro-oncologist – Preston Robert Tisch Brain Tumor Center, United States)
- **Prof. Rakesh Jalali** (Radiation Oncologist – Apollo Proton Cancer Centre, India)
- **A/Prof. Karin Piil** (Senior Researcher – Copenhagen University Hospital-Rigshospitalet, Denmark)
- **A/Prof. Adam Sonabend** (Neurosurgeon – Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, United States)

The COGNO ASM is your opportunity to connect with leaders in the field, share the latest research, and collaborate with colleagues who are passionate about improving outcomes for people living with brain cancer.

Check the program and register for the event here.

COGNO
COOPERATIVE TRIALS GROUP FOR NEURO-ONCOLOGY

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

Some recent ANZUP trial news highlights

ANZUP is proud to celebrate the latest results our globally significant studies.

At the recent ASCO Annual Meeting held in Chicago in May, ANZUP had their largest showing yet - with four oral and four poster presentations.

- **BCG+MM** - Mitomycin plus (BCG), as adjuvant intravesical therapy for high-risk, non-muscle-invasive bladder cancer:a randomised phase 3 trial (ANZUP 1301). Prof Dickon Hayne presented the results of the BCG-MM trial that offers hope for people diagnosed with high-risk non-muscle invasive bladder.
- **EVOLUTION** - 177 Lu-PSMA-617 with ipilimumab and nivolumab in metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer (mCRPC): an investigator-initiated phase 2 trial. Prof Shahneen Sandhu reported the results of the EVOLUTION trial that showed the benefits of combining the radioligand therapy ^{177}Lu-PSMA-617 (LuPSMA) and immunotherapy (nivolumab and ipilimumab) in hard-to-treat and metastatic castrate resistant prostate cancer.
- **TheraP** - Clonal hematopoiesis (CH) in participants with metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer (mCRPC) receiving 177Lu-PSMA-617 or cabazitaxel: an exploratory post-hoc analysis of a randomized phase II trial - Oral presentation by Dr Asli Munzur. Dr Asli Munzur presented fundings from a sub-study of the TheraP trial which showed that treatment with the radioligand therapy LuPSMA was associated with a higher incidence of clonal hematopoiesis mutations compared to cabazitaxel chemotherapy.
- **ENZA-p** - Predictive and prognostic value of baseline PSMA-PET total tumor volume (TTV) and UVmean within a randomised phase 2 trial of enzalutamide versus enzalutamide plus [177Lu] Lu-PSMA-617 (ANZUP1901) - Oral presentation by Prof Louise Emmett. Professor Emmett now shows that total tumour volume as measured with PSMA-PET imaging is a reliable prognostic test for overall survival when people are treated with enzalutamide alone and predictive of the combination with LuPSMA. The study revealed insights into the use of PSMA PET imaging for predicting response to therapy.



L to R: Dr Ed Kwan, Belinda Jago (ANZUP CAP Chair), Prof Ian Davis (ANZUP Chair), Prof Sam Oakes (ANZUP CEO), Prof Louise Emmett, Prof Martin Stockler, Dr Shalini Subramaniam & Dr Alison Zhang

- **ENZAMET**- 8-year outcomes of enzalutamide (ENZA) versus a non-steroidal anti-androgen (NSAA) for metastatic, hormone-sensitive prostate cancer (ENZAMET; ANZUP 1304) - poster presented by Dr Alison Zhang.
- **ENZAMET** - Prognostic value of PSMA-PET against CHAARTED criteria in an ENZAMET sub-cohort - poster presented by Prof Louise Emmett.
- **ENZAMET** - Association of circulating immune and metabolic markers with clinical outcomes in the ENZAMET trial (ANZUP 1304) - poster presentation by Prof Lisa Horvath.
- **PCR-MIB-** Pembrolizumab (pembro) with chemoradiotherapy (CRT) as treatment for muscle-invasive bladder cancer (MIBC): Long-term follow up of secondary endpoints of efficacy including overall survival of the PCR-MIB phase II clinical trial (ANZUP 1502) - poster presentation by Prof Andrew Weickhardt.



Prof Louise Emmett presenting on the ENZA-p study

Dr Ed Kwan's paper *'Lutetium-177–PSMA-617 or cabazitaxel in metastatic prostate cancer: circulating tumor DNA analysis of the randomized phase 2 TheraP trial'* was published in May in Nature Medicine. This important research has identified that certain genetic mutations (spelling mistakes) in a prostate cancer's DNA can reveal hidden weaknesses that make the disease easier to target with specific treatments, including LuPSMA.

Congratulations to the investigators and teams involved in these studies. We express our sincere gratitude to the participants on these studies for their contribution to help us advance towards our vision of living life without fear of cancer.

#ANZUP25 –20-22 July 2025

Our 2025 ASM is being held in Sydney from 20-22 July 2025 with the theme *"Listen, Reflect, Connect"*. The meeting will provide attendees with a forum to discuss and present the latest updates in GU cancer treatment, research and supportive care and to learn more about existing and planned ANZUP trials. Registrations are now open, and we look forward to welcoming you to this widely diverse and immersive face-to-face event.

ANZUP® Cancer Trials Group Limited

Australia and New Zealand Sarcoma Association (ANZSA)

2025 ANZSA Annual Scientific Meeting

Registrations are now open for the 2025 ANZSA Annual Scientific Meeting!

This years' meeting will feature both in-person and online attendance for all who wish to attend. This year's guest speaker is Dr. Jason Yustein, a clinician-scientist and paediatric oncologist from Emory University, USA.

Event Details:

- When: Friday 10th - Saturday 11th of October 2025
- Venue: Crowne Plaza, 110 Liverpool Street, Hobart Tasmania 7000

This is a chance to hear from researchers and sarcoma specialists - from Australia and New Zealand as well as from around the world - about the most up-to-date multidisciplinary research in the sarcoma field.

Register now to secure your spot today!

Abstract Submissions

Submissions for abstracts and posters for the ANZSA 2025 Annual Scientific Meeting have now opened! Abstract/poster submissions must be received electronically via the online form by midnight (AEST) on Friday the 1 August 2025 and must include a declaration of interest.

Submit your abstract submission form.

Sarcoma Awareness Month

Join us this July as we raise awareness for one of Australia's rarest cancers! This July, ANZSA is spotlighting how *research is lagging for sarcoma, despite accounting for one-third of adolescent cancer deaths.*

ANZSA
Australia and New Zealand Sarcoma Association



Sarcoma Awareness Month Webinars

ANZSA has partnered with the VCCC Alliance to provide two informative lunch-time webinars focusing on sarcoma treatment and research.

These webinars are open to all who wish to attend, with more details about each webinar and registration links found below.

Webinar 1: MLL: Molecular sequencing and sarcoma

Tune into this webinar to learn how precision medicine platforms across paediatric, adolescent and young adult (AYA) and adult programs are transforming the sarcoma landscape. Learn how genomic discoveries are being translated into more targeted treatment pathways—reducing patient burden, avoiding ineffective therapies, and shaping a more hopeful future for those affected by sarcoma.

- **When:** Monday July 14th, 1pm - 2pm AEST
- **Speakers:**
  - Dr Liz Connolly (Chair, Medical Oncologist and clinician researcher)
  - Prof David Thomas (Chief Science and Strategy Officer, Omico)
  - Dr Loretta Lau (Molecular Oncologist)

Register now

Webinar 2: A Deep Dive on Liposarcoma

Join us for a comprehensive and multidisciplinary webinar exploring the latest developments in the understanding and management of liposarcoma. This session will provide a concise overview of the histologic subtypes and evolving therapeutic landscape, including novel immunotherapies and targeted treatments.

- **When:** Thursday July 24th, 1pm - 2pm AEST
- **Speakers:**
  - Dr Susie Bae (Chair, Medical Oncologist)
  - Prof David Gyorki (Consultant Surgeon)
  - A/Prof Sarat Chander (Radiation Oncologist)
  - Dr Ian Parish (Group leader and Fundamental Immunologist)

Register now

Great Sarcoma Plank-a-thon

ANZSA invites participants to take on the Great Sarcoma Plank-a-thon and be part of advancing life-saving research to combat this rare and deadly form of cancer.

The Great Sarcoma Plank-a-thon is a community fitness challenge taking place throughout July during Sarcoma Awareness Month, where participants hold the plank position, either solo or in a team relay to raise awareness and funds for sarcoma research. The plank symbolises the strength and resilience needed to face sarcoma, a rare and aggressive cancer that receives limited research funding.

Join us in this incredible journey of making a difference, one plank at a time.

Support, donate or sign up



The Hudson research plank team

ISOQOL Australia & New Zealand Special Interest Group

ISPOR Australia Chapter

ADVANCING PATIENT-CENTRED RESEARCH DOWN UNDER

Bringing together academics, clinicians, consumers, industry representatives and policy makers at all levels of experience, to showcase patient-centred health economics and quality of life research being conducted in Australia, New Zealand, and internationally.

DECEMBER 1-2, 2025
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ABSTRACTS CLOSE JULY 1, 2025

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https://events.humanitix.com/advancing-patient-centred-research-down-under

Abstracts: **Panels:**



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