The Australian Society for Medical Research
ASMR Medical Research Week June 1 to 9 2017
MEDIA RELEASE June 1, 2017

2017 ASMR Queensland Health & Medical Research Award Finalists

Queensland Health and Medical Research Awards supported by the Queensland Government

The Australian Society for Medical Research is delighted to announce the finalists in the four categories for the prestigious Queensland Health and Medical Research Awards.

The winners will be announced at the ASMR MRW® Gala Dinner (Pullman Brisbane) on the 2nd of June 2017.

Clinical Researcher Award:

Professor Clare Heal, James Cook University
Over the past ten years Professor Clare Heal has been principle investigator, or supervising co-investigator, of seven practice based randomised controlled trials investigating the management of skin cancer surgery. In 2016 her study comparing sterile to clean boxed gloves was named one of the top 20 international studies for Primary Care Physicians

Dr Ian Vela, Princess Alexandra Hospital, Australian Prostate Cancer Research Centre
Dr Vela is a consultant Urologic Oncologist at the Princess Alexandra Hospital and Movember Clinician Scientist Fellow at the Australian Prostate Cancer Research Center Queensland. He is a group head and his lab investigates “Precision Medicine” in Prostate Cancer. The overall aim of this program is to improve patient outcomes in all stages of prostate cancer through the latest technologic developments, in a clinically meaningful timeframe, in the immediate future.

Dr Shelley Wilkinson, Mater Research Institute
Dr Shelley Wilkinson is an Advanced Accredited Practising Dietitian with a PhD in Psychology, and is the Senior Research Dietitian in the Mater Mothers’ Hospitals. Her research through her Queensland Government Health Research Fellowship focuses on improving the nutrition knowledge, know-how, and capacity of statewide maternity services and clinicians.

Senior Researcher Award:

Dr Jyotsna Batra, Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation, Queensland University of Technology
Dr Batra is an NHMRC Career Development leading a research group on molecular genetics of prostate cancer. Her current research focus is to identify cancer risk-associated genetic variants and to understand their molecular consequences on cancer initiation and progression. She aims to develop better biomarker to detect cancer early and to identify genetic biomarkers which can distinguish slow growing disease from very aggressive prostate cancer at an early stage, so that better decision on therapeutic interventions can be made.

Dr Motoko Koyama, QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute
Dr Koyama’s scientific career has focused on understanding the mechanisms of antigen presentation during graft-versus-host disease (GVHD). She has shaped a number of paradigm changes in the transplant field, demonstrating that recipient dendritic cells (DC) are not required for the induction of acute GVHD and instead defining an important role for recipient non-hematopoietic antigen presenting cells (APC) in this process. More recently she described how a subset of CD103+ donor DC in the colon define the severity of acute GVHD (J Exp Med 2015) and the importance of donor DC in maintaining regulatory T cell homeostasis to prevent chronic GVHD (Blood 2016).

Professor Jian Yang, Institute for Molecular Bioscience, The University of Queensland
Professor Yang's primary research interests are in developing novel methods and software tools to better understand the genetic architecture of complex traits and diseases using high-throughput genetic and genomic data.

Postdoctoral Researcher:

Dr Nathalie Bock, Queensland University of Technology
While tumour microenvironment is an important modulator of treatment and resistance, the failure of current treatments comes from a lack of relevant models able to provide the complex features of human bone metastatic PCa. Here we developed a reproducible 3D bone-like matrix in vitro, containing patient-derived osteoblasts and mineralised matrix, and used it to assess whether ADT/ATT were responsible for the resistance of PCa cells in the bone metastatic microenvironment.

Dr Tracy O'Mara, QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute
Dr Tracy O'Mara is an NHMRC Early Career Fellow in the Molecular Cancer Epidemiology Group at QIMR Berghofer. Dr O'Mara currently co-leads the international Endometrial Cancer Association Consortium (ECAC), conducting the world's largest genetic association studies of endometrial cancer. She is skilled in bioinformatics analysis and has an interest in the integrative analysis of epigenomic, transcriptomic and genotyping data.

Dr Amirali Popat, The University of Queensland
Dr. Popat graduated in 2012 with a PhD in advanced drug delivery-nanomedicine from The University of Queensland. Currently, he is a NHMRC Early Career Fellow jointly appointed at The University of Queensland's School of Pharmacy and Mater Research Institute. Dr. Popat has exceptional track record in the area of novel drug delivery systems evidenced by 25 peer reviewed publications and 2 patents in the past 5 years with ~950 citations.

Postgraduate Student Researcher Award:
Miss Rhiannon Werder, The University of Queensland
Ms Hannah Thomas, The University of Queensland
Dr Dylan Flaws, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital
Dr Moe Thuzar, School of Medicine, Translational Research Institute
Ms Christine Andrews, The University of Queensland
Mr Richard Lobb, QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute

Check out the extraordinary, cutting edge research conducted by our finalists!

Bio, scientific and lay abstracts for all finalists are available at

https://asmr.org.au/asmr-mrw/media/

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