

HAPPY BIRTHDAY ASMR 50 YEARS

President's Report

I am thrilled to be president as the ASMR celebrates its 50th Anniversary. Established in 1961, the first meeting of the society was held on 12th August in Sydney. The Society has grown enormously since that first meeting 50 years ago. ASMR's integrity and commitment to public, political and scientific advocacy are the hallmarks of an organization widely respected in all arenas of its activities.

When I first joined the South Australian ASMR committee in 1999 the society had begun to establish a truly national identity. This drive began with the campaign for a consistently timed and national medical research week and saw the commencement of ASMR MRW®. The ASMR Medallist award was created to provide a national focus for ASMR MRW® with the award recognizing an eminent national or international individual who has contributed through scientific endeavour and /or political advocacy; both are now flagship events for our Society. The inaugural medallist in 1998 was Nobel Prize Winner, Professor Peter Doherty, a real coup at the time. The medallist tour continues to be a major part of ASMR MRW® with our medallist speaking at gala dinners in each state across the week and also presenting the televised NAB address at the National Press Club in Canberra. The ASMR Medallist tour is a vehicle which provides an opportunity for the current health and medical research (HMR) message to be heard.

In this newsletter we reflect back on some of the significant initiatives and achievements of the society: the creation of the Champion Ma Playoust Award for early career researchers, the "evolution" of the society and the vision of the Australian Health and Medical Research Congress (AHMRC). In this era of many financial pressures, ASMR will continue its fight for the HMR sector, however, many challenging times do lie ahead.

As parliament sat for the first time in 2011, Australians were being challenged both physically and mentally with unprecedented meteorological events. Australia now faces fiscal constraints from



Alison Butt hands over the ASMR Presidency to Emma Parkinson-Lawrence

both the recent global economic crisis and natural disasters, which together will undoubtedly continue to inflict pressure and lead to budget limitations. The NHMRC budget again appears to be under threat of being cut and the ASMR has put a call out to its members to write to politicians extolling the value and benefits of HMR. As you are already aware the current cycle of NHMRC funding has ended which in real terms means that we are experiencing a decline in funding moving forward. Cuts to an already declining funding pool will only have disastrous consequences to the sector. It is therefore of paramount importance that the sector unite as one voice to deliver the message that investment in HMR delivers not only health but substantial economic benefit to all Australians: an estimated net benefit of \$29.5 billion between 1993 and 2005 and on average a \$2.17 return with a maximum of \$6.00 for every dollar invested in Australian health R & D¹. The health and economic argument is indeed impelling but we believe the sector must look at a broader narrative, finding a voice and champions in economic, business and education forums. It is time for the Australian HMR sector to articulate its vision for the next five to ten years and to successfully do this we are going to need a united front. I therefore call upon the various HMR agencies to come together and agree upon crucial points to take to government.

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Medical Research**

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**Newsletter Editor-in-Chief,
Dr Daniel Wallace**

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Framework for the future — An Asia Pacific HMR Funding Union facilitated by Norman Swan included panellists Rado Faletic, Andrew Cochrane, Kim Mulholland, Ed Liu, Robyn Norton and Richard Woolcott

HMR underpins health delivery and is a pivotal component of the government's vision for healthcare reform in Australia. Clearly there is a pipeline for the translation of HMR into improved health outcomes, beginning with the discovery of new knowledge from basic and fundamental research and culminating in its

translation into practice. This critically aligns with the government's current initiatives on implementation of the health reform agenda, which can only be strengthened by continued support for our HMR workforce. There is an ongoing need to build meaningful and sustainable employment. To facilitate translation practicing clinicians who are actively engaged in research are an important component of the HMR workforce. Clinicians are also a critical link between research of clinical relevance and its rapid implementation into better clinical practice. In a recent extension of ASMR's workforce survey 'Planning the Health and Medical Research Workforce 2010–2019'², ASMR sought to determine the number of clinicians actively engaged in research and what was their funding agency. While a significant proportion of clinician researchers were funded through the NHMRC, they were only approximately 2.5% of the total workforce at our leading medical research institutes³. Constraints on the NHMRC budget over the last 2 years have led to an alarming decline in funding for the nation's best and brightest researchers through the NHMRC Senior Fellowships scheme. In 2010, none of the applicants ranked as 'excellent' by their peers received funding, a decrease from 67% funded in 2008 and 35% funded in 2009. The ASMR is urging the government to facilitate the implementation of the Government's health reform agenda through increased support for Australia's world-class HMR workforce in the 2011–12 Federal Budget.

In ASMR's quest to advocate for the continued support of Australia's world class HMR sector we continue to investigate other models for sustained funding, including a variety of models used by other sectors. As you will be aware ASMR is exploring the possibility of an Asia Pacific Union similar to that of the European 7 Framework Program. At the 5th AHMRC, ASMR hosted the forum 'Framework for the future — An Asia Pacific HMR Funding Union'. Whilst the forum highlighted that an Asia Pacific funding model similar to that of the European Framework 7 model would have its inherent

difficulties if we focus translating aspirations into objectives the vision is not insurmountable, but it will take time. A feature article summarising the forum can be found in *Nature Medicine* (Volume 17, Number 1, January 2011, pp8–9).

ASMR Medical Research Week® (June 2nd–10th) will again be a major highlight of the HMR calendar. The week provides a unique opportunity for demystifying the barriers between researchers, our community and government. Preparations are well underway around the country and will include career development programs, scientific meetings, public outreach events, high school career programs and gala dinners. For more information about events occurring in your state please visit the ASMR website (<http://www.asmr.org.au/MRW.html>). I very much look forward to joining you in the festivities.

A highlight of ASMR MRW® is the ASMR Medallist tour. It is an honour and pleasure to announce that the 2011 ASMR Medallist is Nobel Laureate Professor Barry J. Marshall AC, Clinical Professor, University of Western Australia. Professor Marshall has been described as 'A medical pioneer whose work transcends all boundaries'. Professor Marshall will present at all ASMR MRW® state gala dinners and will deliver the televised NAB address at the National Press Club on June 8th.

The 5th Australian Health and Medical Research congress was held at the new Melbourne Convention Centre in November 2010. A biannual event, over 1500 delegates were attracted to a plethora of enthralling presentations in this multi-disciplinary environment. Delegates appreciated the rare opportunity of being able to attend sessions outside their specific area of expertise. A full report of the congress can be found in this newsletter. I would like to sincerely thank Convenor Dr. Rosemary Keogh and program Convenor Dr. Michael Hickey for putting together such a stellar conference. The 2010 ASMR National Scientific Conference (NSC) "Infection and Disease" was held as part of the AHMRC. I sincerely thank our NSC Convenor Dr. Gilda Tachedjian.

I am delighted to announce that the 2011 ASMR NSC is on Indigenous Health: Action on Prevention and will be held from Sunday November 13th to Wednesday November 16th at the Cairns convention centre. The ASMR conference convenor Dr. Roger Yazbek, together with the Scientific Programming Committee Chair Professor Kerin O'Dea are already assembling an exciting, integrated and thought provocative program.

In closing I would like to wish all of you the very best of luck with grant submissions in 2011.

**Emma Parkinson-Lawrence,
President**

**ASMR NSC
2010:
Indigenous
Health: ACTION
on Prevention
Cairns Convention
Centre,
November 13–16th**

Themes:

- Primary and Preventative Health Care Mental and Psychosocial Health
- Early Intervention and Good Clinical Care: Maternal and Child Health
- Chronic Disease
- Infectious disease
- Amplifiers of Chronic Disease
- Research Methodologies

1. Access Economics. *Exceptional Returns: The Value of Investing in Health R&D in Australia II*. <http://www.asmr.org.au/Publications.html>
 2. Schofield D. *Planning the Health and Medical Research Workforce 2010–2019*. <http://www.asmr.org.au/Publications.html>
 3. Unpublished data.

A look back at the Campion Ma Playoust Memorial Award



Professor John Funder,
ASMR President 1979

The Campion Ma Playoust Memorial Award was instituted by a motion of the Annual General Meeting of the Society in December 1975. It consists of a cash award and a certificate which is presented for the best contribution for an oral and/or poster presentation to the Annual Scientific

Meeting by a student member or a member under thirty years of age at the time of the Meeting. The history behind the instigation of the award is remembered by Professor John Funder.

In August 1973 I returned to Melbourne from three postdoctoral years overseas, in San Francisco and Paris. Within a month I was collared by Jack Martin and Paul Nestel, for some reason in the long defunct Commerce Building at Melbourne University, and signed two application forms — for membership of ASMR, and to stand as a Director. It was different then: the problem was finding people to stand, rather than choosing between an impressive list of candidates. It was also different in that the membership was overwhelmingly male, and medical graduates, PhD's were scarce: Melbourne University graduated its first in 1947, and in the late 1960's I was PhD candidate 463, across all faculties over two decades.

The ASMR meeting in December 1973 was at Surfers Paradise, and one of the most emotionally charged meetings I have ever been to. Memories were fresh of the death of Marc Playoust, a former ASMR President who opted subsequently for the priesthood: while returning to Sydney from a meeting interstate he was killed in a horrific car accident, and the Society instituted the Playoust Award in his memory. At Surfers, after dinner one evening, a group decided to go swimming, and the sandbar on which they were standing gave way: two of their number, Claire Campion and Marcus Ma, did not return. Claire was a young investigator, a candidate for the Playoust Award: in honour of the two members whose lives were cut short at Surfers, the Award became the Campion Ma Playoust Memorial Award shortly thereafter.

Professor John Funder,
ASMR President 1979,
Senior Fellow, Prince Henry's Institute



Professor Wayne Tilley,
Campion Ma Playoust
Memorial Award winner 1979

As a PhD student in the Hormone Receptor Laboratory at Flinders University Medical Centre, I was strongly encouraged by my supervisors Dr Elizabeth McCant and Professor Willis Marshall to become involved in the ASMR as a means of advancing my professional career and to provide a forum for political activism on

the part of the scientific community. It was at my first ASMR scientific meeting in 1979, as a PhD student, that I had the honour of being the recipient of the Campion Ma Playoust Memorial Award. Now thinking back, this award encouraged my pursuit of scientific knowledge and greatly assisted my endeavour to have a career in medical research.

I felt that the ASMR provided a relatively unique meeting format in the 1970's and 80's that allowed students and early career researchers to directly interact and network with senior peers, which often did not happen at larger scientific meetings. For a young and aspiring medical researcher, the ASMR provided a perfect forum to instil confidence in individuals at the brink of professional development. It was at these early ASMR meetings where I met many passionate advocates of medical research, including Professor John Funder, a former President of the Society, who became one of my long-term career mentors. Another senior peer that I met early in my ASMR experiences was Professor Rob Sutherland, whom I continue to collaborate with today, more than 30 years later.

I have no doubt that the Campion Ma Playoust Memorial Award contributed to subsequent career opportunities, including an NHMRC CJ Martin Fellowship in 1987 and a UT Southwestern Fellowship in 1989, that took me to Dallas, Texas, where I first cloned the human androgen receptor. Awards such as this can provide a competitive edge when applying for fellowships or grants. I was on the ASMR board before embarking overseas, which I also feel contributed to my professional development. On my return to Australia, I set up my own laboratory at Flinders Medical Centre and continued to actively support the ASMR, both personally and by encouraging staff to participate. I rejoined the ASMR board and became president in 1993, a year of political change that was a very exciting time for promoting medical research.

■ ASMR Mentoring Program

The ASMR invites members who are 2–12 years postdoctoral to participate in the ASMR Mentoring Program. Applications are accepted all year round and the program is free to ASMR members.

For additional information and application forms please visit <http://www.asmr.org.au/Mentor.html>

Dr Juliet Taylor,
ASMR Research Careers
Convenor

I have been very fortunate to develop many wonderful long-term professional relationships and friendships through my association with the ASMR. Our research program over the years has benefited enormously from the advice and encouragement of these colleagues. In particular, the insistence by many of my colleagues and mentors on maintaining a strong focus on clinically relevant outcomes has ensured that translating our research findings into clinical practice to improve patient outcomes is a priority. The Champion Ma Playoust Memorial Award undoubtedly facilitated my early career opportunities. Additionally, my longer-term success is in no small part due to appreciation of the value of excellence in health and medical research that the ASMR has played such an important role in articulating to the community and government.

**Professor Wayne Tilley,
ASMR President 1993,
Dame Roma Mitchell Chair
in Cancer Research,
The University of Adelaide**



**Dr. Dean Moss,
Champion Ma Playoust
Memorial Award winner 1990**

I look back on being awarded the Champion Ma Playoust Memorial Award with great fondness. It came towards the end of my PhD at QIMR through The University of Queensland (UQ) and provided recognition that my disciplined, problem-solving journey was coming to an end.

I was not publishing the highest impact papers hence the highly competitive NHMRC fellowship path was not for me. Instead, I went into diagnostics R&D. The focus of time-lined, team driven R&D and the commercial imperative excites me still. We developed products and seeing R&D outcomes packaged in a box that customers bought was personally rewarding. I learnt first-hand about patenting the fruits of research whilst running project teams and I moved into a business development role. Success led to a management role with AMRAD and after 2 years I was promoted to a divisional General Manager. I sold this division with much travel and moved to the US with the acquirer.

This opportunity led to challenging corporate roles in UK healthcare that added more international experience and commercial rigor to my skills focused on driving profitability. A few years later, I co-founded a healthcare start-up company, providing tremendous lessons in capital raising, risk, return and personal belief.

Something was missing in that triple bottom line so I moved back to Brisbane to UniQuest and UQ after selling my business. I revel in the diversity and depth of quality research across UQ and its five partners and work with a talented team to manage intellectual property and its commercialisation. Supporting research talent and championing innovation and entrepreneurship is both humbling and inspiring. The Champion Ma Playoust Memorial Award is an ever present reminder in accelerating my early career path. Australia's research excellence should be celebrated. ASMR plays a vital advocacy role and recognises the on-going need to fund quality research and its translation to achieve international competitiveness.

**Dr. Dean Moss,
General Manager, Life Sciences,
UniQuest Pty Limited**

The 5th Australian Health & Medical Research Congress, Melbourne 2010



The Honourable Mark Butler MP, Minister for Mental Health and Ageing opens the Congress

The 5th Australian Health & Medical Research Congress held in Melbourne last November was a resounding success. The magnificent new Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre provided a fantastic venue and even though we all walked many kilometres, the wonderful science (and food!) made it well worthwhile.

We were privileged to have the Hon Mark Butler, Minister for

Mental Health and Ageing, get the week started with an insightful and animated opening address. This was followed by the NH&MRC symposium with a 'State of the NH&MRC' address by Professor Warwick Anderson, CEO, and two speakers focussing on the importance of translational research.

The four plenary speakers, Professors Brigid Hogan (Duke), Vivek Mittal (Cornell), David Sinclair (Harvard) and Reinhard Fässler (Max Plank) presented outstanding lectures which were truly inspiring and it was certainly a bonus for those of us who had an opportunity to meet with them and talk science. In addition, they all contributed to individual society programs and gave very generously of their time.

With over 50 international speakers and 130 national speakers representing the diverse research fields of the 23 participating societies, the congress certainly achieved its aim to foster the exchange of information and ideas between researchers across a broad range of scientific endeavours. Multiple concurrent sessions, over 800 oral and poster presentations and over 1500 delegates are testament to this and to the greater ideal to support and promote Australian research.

A real highlight of the week was the Cass Foundation Best of the Best poster award session on the final day where the best student poster from each society was presented. It was particularly impressive to see so many Honours students make the final, including the overall winner, Mr James Esposito representing the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand. The future of research is certainly in very talented hands.

The ASMR National Scientific Conference, 'Infection and Disease', held as part of congress, was a great success with over 170 delegates registering to attend. The Meeting Convenor Associate Professor Gilda Tachedjian and Program Convenor Associate Professor Richard Ferrero are to be congratulated on the stellar program that was enthusiastically received by delegates. The Firkin and Edwards orators, Professor David Sinclair and Professor Alan Cowman respectively, delivered superb lectures and the Champion-Ma-Playoust Memorial Award for the best contribution by a student member

or member under thirty years of age was won by Ms Fatima El-Assaad for her work on *Plasmodium berghei*.

I would like to thank all the participating organisations and members of the organising committee, particularly the Program Convenor Associate Professor Michael Hickey. They all worked extremely hard, committing an incredible amount of time and effort to work on congress. They are all remarkable people and I challenge everyone to step up and contribute to your society as they have done. As always we are very grateful to all our sponsors, supporters and trade exhibitors without whom such an event would not happen. I would also like to thank all those involved with the organising and running of the AH&MRC, from satchel packers to invited speakers to delegates, it was the countless contributions of many that made the event not only very enjoyable but also a great success.

**Dr. Rosemary Keogh,
5th AHMRC Convenor**



AHMRC organisers Maree Overall and Claire Ciantar from ASN Events with AHMRC 2010 Convenor Rosemary Keogh



Professor David Sinclair
— 2010 Firkin Orator



Professor Alan Cowman
— 2010 Edwards Orator



The ASMR Professional Development Day, held during the Congress, was a great success

A rare opportunity in this age of specialisation

At a meeting in August 1998 the Society's President, Steve Wesselingh inspired the ASMR Board to take on the challenge of organizing a "FASEB style" meeting to bring together researchers from a wide range of Australian medical research societies. ASMR, with unique reach through its Affiliated Societies was well placed to bring this much wanted meeting to fruition. The conference would be a vehicle to re-invigorate exchange between Australian researchers who were finding it increasingly difficult to attend all of the specialist meetings relevant to their fields of research. With advantages such as increasing exposure for presenters, greater pulling power to attract high quality international speakers and improved access to trade and corporate sponsorship the proposal received enthusiastic support from Affiliates. The challenge was to develop a sustainable model that satisfied the intellectual and financial expectations of each participating society — most societies rely on income from their annual conferences to remain financially sound. The enormous task of hammering out an agreement was put in the very capable hands of Bronwyn Kingwell (later ASMR President) who with Mike Pickford of ASN Events developed a durable model that

set the Australian Health and Medical Research Congress on its course. The collegial efforts of the members of the local and program organising committees (nearly 40 strong) representing the participating societies ensured success. Opened by the Governor General, the first Congress held in Melbourne in November 2002 attracted over 2000 delegates from 25 societies with more than 700 presenters. Media attention was impressive with well above expected coverage in print, radio and TV. In an era when industry sponsorship was divided amongst an ever-expanding number of specialist societies the Congress attracted an unprecedented level of corporate sponsorship ensuring financial sustainability. From that first through to the recent fifth Congress delegates have expressed their enthusiastic support and gratitude for the fertile and serendipitous environment that is widely recognized as a rare opportunity in this age of specialisation.

**Dr. Peter O'Loughlin,
ASMR President 2001
Directorate Manager, Chemical Pathology,
SA Pathology, Adelaide**



Peter O'Loughlin,
ASMR President 2001

Conferences

**The 5th Annual
National Dementia
Research Forum
September 22–23, 2011
Wesley Conference
Centre, Sydney**

Further information:
www.dementia.unsw.edu.au/

ASMR — lessons from the past



Professor Christine Clarke,
ASMR President 1994

The political landscape of the 1990s seems a distant memory, but looking back, it is striking that so many of the challenges faced by the health and medical research sector then were so similar to those we face in 2011. In the 1990s, the role and importance of health and medical research in maintenance and improvement of the health of all Australians needed to be continually and vigorously argued, with a base of understanding within the political system that was generally very low. Moreover, the critical contribution of our health and medical research effort to the nation's future prosperity had yet to be accepted. The sector relied on 'champions', either political or scientific, to make the case for sustaining and increasing health and medical research funding, and to argue for building a strong medical research effort to underpin current and future health needs and future prosperity. In the 1990s, ASMR directors stood on the shoulders of stalwarts of the medical research community who had tirelessly advocated for health and medical research, including some whose energetic commitment to ASMR and advocacy had not wavered since the earliest days of the foundation of the Society.

A highlight of the 1990s was the commitment by Graham Richardson, during the 1993 election campaign, to double NHMRC funding within the decade. A farseeing commitment, and an outcome largely influenced by the persistent and ongoing advocacy by ASMR. Perhaps predictably however, once the commitment had been made, there was much political nervousness about how to deliver this. The sorts of concerns that were raised included: Was this additional investment in research really needed? Did it really lead to improved health? Was this just an attempt by health and medical researchers to improve their own circumstances? In addition, the NHMRC came under scrutiny — was this the best vehicle to distribute these additional funds? Should governments determine research priorities? Should government-overseen processes, or other external organisations, replace peer-review administered by the NHMRC?

Two reports were critical in affirming the importance of health and medical research for a healthy society, and role of the NHMRC in delivering health advice based on research, and ASMR participated directly in both. The Prime Minister's Science and Engineering Council report 'Research for a Healthy Society' affirmed the critical role of health and medical research in the health system, and highlighted the importance of embedding medical research activities, and medical research funding, in a context of improved health care. The Bienenstock Report presented government with a detailed review of the NHMRC, in order to assist government in evaluating the future role of NHMRC in health and medical research funding and oversight. John Bienenstock's report validated the strength of Australia's health and medical research sector; articulated the

fundamental importance of NHMRC; and emphasised the urgent need for more resources, for health and medical research as a whole, and to assist the NHMRC in funding and overseeing the sector. These two reports contributed to government's decision to proceed with the increased investment in health and medical research, and since then government commitments to health and medical research have been ongoing.

Looking back to the 1990s, it is hard to overstate the anxiety within the health and medical research community; the threats faced to the fabric and future of health care in Australia; and the potential for a very different outcome than that which eventuated. In response to this, ASMR embarked on the gathering and analysis of quantitative data, from ABS and AIHW, to support its quantitative and evidence-based messages to government and to the community. ASMR also recognised that its direct membership represented only a fraction of its constituency, and instituted the expanded membership categories of Affiliate and Associate, so that the voices of all involved in health and medical research in Australia could be heard via the ASMR.

Also looking back to the 1990s — ASMR undertook its advocacy in a very different environment. Hard as it is to imagine, the internet, mobile phones or emails were largely inaccessible. Communication was by telephone or FAX, and mass communication, to the media or to politicians, was extraordinarily laborious. Snail mail was the only mail that existed then! There was much excitement (and relief) when the ASMR office gained access to a FAX machine that could simultaneously send multiple FAXes! However, one upside of technology limitation was fewer competing interests in the same space: in 2011 and with the full range of digital media at their disposal, Universities, Institutes, disease-specific foundations, individual researchers and others all compete for the attention of the same audience, and all with apparently equally compelling merit. ASMR's voice, arguing cogently for the sector as a whole, and emphasising health and prosperity gains for all Australians of continued investment in health and medical research, is needed more than ever.

Finally, the work of ASMR has always relied on the corporate memory, and the wise guiding counsel, of its permanent staff, and in the 1990s we were fortunate indeed that Cath West joined ASMR — a major milestone in the development and success of the ASMR since then!

Christine Clarke,
ASMR President 1994
Deputy Director,
Westmead Institute for Cancer Research,
Westmead Millennium Institute

Siobhan Schabrun — Winner of the 2010 International ASMR Research Award

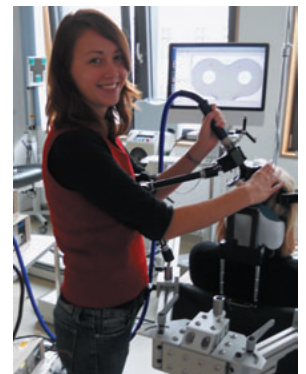
The discovery that the brain is plastic is one of the most exciting scientific breakthroughs to occur in recent years. This understanding has revolutionised neuroscience, giving rise to new research examining the mechanisms underlying this remarkable ability. This work is performed in the hope that we may one day be able to harness brain plasticity to improve functional outcomes for those suffering from neurological conditions. In fact, it is already possible to induce plasticity using specific experimental interventions. The application of these interventions in clinical populations is one of my key research interests.

Professor Joseph Classen from The University of Leipzig, Germany played a leading role in the development of a plasticity inducing protocol known as paired associative stimulation (PAS). This technique combines non-invasive brain stimulation (known as transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) with electrical stimulation of the median nerve at the wrist. When these two stimuli are given at an interval of 25 ms, plasticity is induced in the human motor cortex. However, recent research has

suggested that plasticity might also be induced when longer intervals (200 or 300 ms) are used. To test this theory, I was fortunate to spend two months at The University of Leipzig working with Professor Classen in 2010.

During my stay we tested three different PAS intervals, confirming our hypothesis that plasticity can also be induced with longer intervals. However, our hypotheses regarding the mechanisms underlying this plasticity have so far been rejected. Our collaboration is ongoing as we seek to understand exactly which mechanisms might be involved. Information on these mechanisms is essential if plasticity inducing protocols are to be developed which reduce symptoms and improve function in neurological conditions. Research visits such as this are invaluable for early career researchers and I am sincerely grateful to ASMR for their generous support.

Siobhan Schabrun,
NHMRC Clinical Research Fellow
School of Health and Rehabilitation
Science, The University of Queensland



Siobhan Schabrun at work at the University of Leipzig

ASMR Medallist 2011 — Nobel Laureate Barry Marshall AC

In 2005 Barry J. Marshall and J. Robin Warren were awarded the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine in recognition of their 1982 discovery that a bacterium, *Helicobacter pylori*, causes one of the most common and important diseases of mankind, peptic ulcer disease.

Barry Marshall met Robin Warren, a pathologist interested in gastritis, during internal medicine fellowship training at Royal Perth Hospital in 1981. The pair studied the presence of spiral bacteria in association with gastritis. The following year (1982), *Helicobacter pylori* was cultured for the first time and they developed their hypothesis related to the bacterial cause of peptic ulcer and gastric cancer.

In 1984, while at Fremantle Hospital, Marshall proved that the new germ was harmful in a well-publicised self-administered experiment, in which he drank a culture of *H.pylori*. Persevering despite widespread skepticism, Marshall also came up with combinations of drugs that killed the *H.pylori* bacteria and eliminated ulcers permanently.

The hypothesis that *H.pylori* is a causative factor of stomach cancer was accepted in 1994 by the World

Health Organisation. This work has now been acknowledged as the most significant discovery in the history of gastroenterology and is compared to the development of the polio vaccine and the eradication of smallpox.

Affecting 50% of the global population, *H.pylori* is recognized as the most common chronic infection in the world. "Like a trail of crumbs, the DNA of our *Helicobacter pylori* can show where we were born and where our ancestors traveled from over the past 60,000 years" says Marshall.

In 2008 Professor Marshall was elected into the prestigious US National Academy of Science, an institution that was established in 1863 by President Abraham Lincoln. This recognition further establishes Barry's international scientific credentials.

Barry was born in Kalgoorlie in 1951 and attended Marist Brothers College in Perth from 1960–68. He completed his undergraduate medical degree at The University of Western Australia in 1974. He is married with four children and four grandchildren and lives in Subiaco, Western Australia.



Nobel Laureate Barry Marshall AC — 2011 ASMR Medallist



The ASMR Board at work.

L to R: Cath West, Kristen Nowak, Rosemary Keogh, Rachel Burt, Roger Yazbek, Steven Polyak, Daniel Wallace, Juliet Taylor, Naomi Rogers, Nik Zeps, Paul Dawson and Emma Parkinson-Lawrence

ASMR Directors 2011

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Contact details from www.asmr.org.au/Statebranch.html

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