

NEWS LETTER

MELBOURNE
MELANOMA
PROJECT

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Melbourne Melanoma Project

NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION

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Welcome to our third Melbourne Melanoma Project newsletter. This newsletter is put together by the MMP Consumer Reference Group (CRG) to inform our MMP participants and the melanoma community of MMP's work. Using our social media sites we also try to keep you up to date with the latest melanoma research happening here and overseas. Please note that most articles are sourced via Google Alerts and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Melbourne Melanoma Project.



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Melbourne Melanoma Project

MMP's Good News

MMP are very pleased to announce that the Victorian Cancer Agency has chosen to fund a new version of the Melbourne Melanoma Project for 2014-16. MMP2 will continue to ask patients to donate their melanoma tissue to research and extend our very valuable collection of samples and clinical data. Under the leadership of Professor Grant McArthur, the Chief Investigator of the project, 20

Co-Investigators, across four MMP sites, will be utilising MMP samples and data to determine the immunology and molecular profiles of melanoma samples. It is hoped that this information will provide greater clinical insight into which patients will benefit the most from each of the new era melanoma drugs. We look forward to telling you about our future research outcomes.



Consumer Corner

Congratulations to the MMP Consumer Reference Group (CRG). In November 2013 the CRG were awarded the Peter Mac 'Team Award for Community Contribution'. The awards were presented by the Chair of the Peter Mac Board, Ms Wendy Harris SC, at the Peter Mac Annual General Meeting. Mr Paul White, Chair of the CRG received the award on behalf of the Group.

Patient Teaching Associates

A medical student program at the Eastern Health Clinical School (EHCS) assists future doctors with their consultation skills. Volunteer patients are required to become Patient Teaching Associates (PTAs) to contribute to the students understanding of chronic illness and patient management in a GP-like setting. If you would like to find out more or would like to participate in this worthwhile experience please contact the PTA Coordinator via phone +61 3 9091 8821 or email pta.ehcs@monash.edu



Life in a MMP melanoma research laboratory...

As Associate Professor Alexander Dobrovic arrives at his laboratory at the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research (LICR) in the Olivia Newton-



Courtesy of MMP

John Cancer and Wellness Centre (ONJCWC), at the Austin Hospital, the academic questioning begins. Alex heads the LICR Translational Genomics & Epigenomics Laboratory where he and three post docs are looking at new ways of helping develop tests that will facilitate personalised medicine. The postdocs, Drs Jonathan Weiss, Hongdo Do and Nick Wong are busy trying to understand the genetics behind melanoma and other cancers that influence the growth and spread of disease in individuals. Two research assistants and several PhD students complete Alex's laboratory. All interact with Alex individually and in group settings to ensure a high standard of research is

maintained and important questions are answered accurately and economically. The lab also has key interactions with Professor Jonathan Cebon's cell and immunobiology lab at the LICR and with Professor Grant McArthur's group at the Peter Mac.

Molecular biology is an expensive platform and genetic technologies such as Next Generation Sequencing can be very costly. While Alex's staff and students don their lab coats and physically conduct the experiments and analyses Alex is reading scientific articles, writing funding applications to continue his research, reviewing experimental data and manuscripts, encouraging students with their endeavours, fielding questions from other researchers and developing new collaborations. Alex is passionate about his

melanoma research and a team publication in a prestigious science journal only serves to confirm his chosen career path.

At the 2013 MMP Scientific Exchange Meeting Alex noted the enthusiasm of the melanoma community for a blood test that could identify the presence of melanoma or its progression. The successful funding of MMP2 has meant that Alex's group can now investigate the possibility of developing a 'liquid biopsy' test that could potentially achieve that desire. His team will be using de-identified blood specimens from the Melbourne Melanoma Project to detect the presence of melanoma DNA in blood. Alex says that the MMP specimen collection and database is an invaluable tool for melanoma research and that all donors should be congratulated on their contribution to medical research.

“ When ‘i’ is replaced by ‘we’, even ‘illness’ becomes ‘wellness’ ”

Raising Melanoma Awareness: Save the Date

Melanoma survivors Jay Allen (6 year stage III survivor) and Andrew Rust (12 year stage IV survivor) are walking from Sydney to Melbourne to raise melanoma awareness and promote melanoma research in Australia. MMP would like to congratulate them on their amazing fortitude and effort.

Jay and Andrew's 900km

journey will end at the MCG during the Swans and Hawks night AFL match on Saturday the 26th July 2014. Their final leg will swing past Peter Mac where we too can join in the celebration of this awesome achievement. Details regarding the Peter Mac celebration will be advertised on the MMP website as they become

available. Alternately you can register your name via info@melbournemelanomaproject.com to receive an event update email. Please put this date in your calendars. Further information about the walk itself can be found on the website:



www.everydayhero.com.au/event/900KMFORACURE2014

The Melbourne Melanoma Project is supported by the Victorian Government through the Victorian Cancer Agency Translational Research Program. The Victorian Cancer Agency had a responsibility for building cancer research capacity and capability across Victoria. One of its main functions is to align and support clinical, academic and research organisations involved in cancer research to maximise patient outcomes.