

CLINICAL RESEARCH SUPPORT COMMITTEE

The Clinical Research Support Committee (CRSC) provides a mechanism by which clinical research related core activities are supported, prioritised and guided such as through provision of database development and maintenance, biostatistical support and improved IT resources for research.

Members of the CRSC represent cross-campus Department Directors and include:

- (Chair) A/Prof Raymond Snyder – Director of Medical Oncology STV
- Prof Richard M. Fox – Director of Research STV
- Prof Wayne Morrison – Head of the University of Melbourne Department of Surgery and Director of the Bernard O'Brien Institute of Microsurgery
- Prof Peter Choong – Chief Medical Officer, Head of Orthopaedics
- Prof Linda Worrall-Carter – Director STV/ACU Nursing Research (from October 2007)
- A/Prof John D. Santamaria – Director & Head of Intensive Care Unit
- A/Prof Robyn Langham – Director of Nephrology
- A/Prof Danny Liew – Physician & Epidemiologist (from November 2007)
- Mr Sandy Heriot – Colorectal Surgeon
- Dr Evange Romas – Rheumatologist
- Richard Hill – Chief Technology Officer
- Dr Andrea Lines – Executive Officer Research & Grants Unit
- Peter Tonoli – IT Manager SVI & University of Melbourne STV (from September 2007)
- (Secretary) Jacqueline Barry – Project Manager, Research Directorate

Meetings of the CRSC began in March 2007, leading into a total of eight meetings held for that year. Activities guided by the CRSC in 2007 comprised of:

- Purchase and installation of a complete, integrated biostatistical software package 'STATA' and 30 concurrent users licence, to assist researchers of all disciplines in doing data analysis, data management and publication-quality graphics. This led to provision of a public forum to launch the statistical program, highlight the software's capabilities and to detail the resources and assistance available on campus. Workshops to train staff on STATA at both basic and intermediary levels will be offered in 2008.
- Investigation of biostatistical support for staff led to obtaining the services of a campus-based Biostatistical and Study Design expert, A/Prof Danny Liew, University of Melbourne's Department of Medicine at STV, to assist with clinical and applied research projects. This service can assist researchers planning or undertaking clinical trials and observational studies, including data analysis. Assistance can also be provided for health services data and health economics research.
- Provision of a customisable database led into engagement of an IT consultant to cost-effectively customise the system into the Hospital network and its Patient Administration System (PAS). This new database now serves as a good model for other clinical research units.
- Participation in the Victorian-lead Molecular Medicine Informatics Model (MMIM) database. The MMIM is a research platform that links research databases across hospitals in a de-identified manner to enable research genetics

and clinical data be analysed, whilst maintaining patient privacy in ways not previously possible. This led into STV becoming a signatory to a Deed of Accession as part of the Collaboration Agreement and thereby becoming a member of the Management Steering Committee. The MMIM project continues to attract new members both from within Victoria and interstate, currently having 22 major Hospitals, Research Institutes on board. The MMIM is now called BioGrid Australia.

- Provision of a campus-wide consultative forum during Research Week on 20 August to provide a valuable opportunity for researchers from medical, nursing, scientific and allied health backgrounds to provide input and comments about barriers relating to clinical research on campus. This led into revision of CRSC agenda items to better align the committee's work to meet stakeholder's needs.
- Review of the Hospital's equipment leasing and purchasing policy to provide opportunities to purchase equipment via available external donations. This led into enabling researchers to apply research donations from philanthropic sources for example purchasing equipment outright, rather than having to lease it.
- Assessment of current strategies and alternatives for management of hospital-wide electronic medical records. This led into exploration of the financial, legal and policy review options which continue to be analysed in 2008
- Involvement in meetings to assess an appropriate clinical IT solution for public hospitals across the State and Australia. This led into involvement in State-wide government forums, and presentations to Medical Directors on current IT options
- Establishment of education and training seminars for post-graduate and medical fellows, beginning in 2008 to integrate into the monthly Clinical Research Methods seminars noted above, to provide more detailed analysis of Clinical / Science topics. This led into formation of a working group, representing Medical Directors across departments and institutions to decide on potential clinical and/or science topics for public debate
- Consideration of improved funding options to support research nurses and database managers. This led into a decision to create a specific Research Endowment Fund category be made available specifically for research nurses / database managers, for funding rounds in 2008 for projects commencing 2009
- Improvement of research or clinical trials enrolment notifications in the Hospital's Patient Administration System (PAS). This led into creation of a 'research alert' notice in the PAS database such that staff can now readily identify patients who are involved in clinical trials.

The Clinical Research Support Committee will meet bimonthly in 2008.