



Australian
Atherosclerosis
Society Inc.

AAS E-Bulletin

Welcome to the June 2022 edition of the AAS e-News, updating you on:

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Save the date: Hybrid ASM in November

Our ASM organising committee is excited to announce that we'll be holding our first IN PERSON Scientific Meeting since the pandemic! The venue has been booked and we are well underway with plans.

The 2022 AAS Annual Scientific Meeting and the Annual General Meeting will be held from Wednesday November 23 - Friday November 25.

Monash CBD Conference Centre
Level 7, 30 Collins Street, Melbourne
9.30 am Wednesday November 23 - 12.30 pm Friday November 25

Abstracts will be due by the end of September, with both oral and mini-oral (e-poster) sessions. Rising Star Awards will be awarded and Student Travel Grants may be available (funding allowing).

If you are planning on attending, please think about booking your accommodation and travel now. There are many, many hotel and short-stay options nearby, which means everyone will find something to suit their budget.

If you are unable to attend in person, we will be running the meeting as a hybrid meeting, so you will be able to join online.

The Clinical Masterclass will run from Friday afternoon until ~4pm on Saturday November 26 and AAS members (scientific and clinical) will be welcome to register for this meeting also.

Registration fees will apply for the face-to-face ASM, online ASM attendance and the Clinical Masterclass.

More details, including Plenary Speakers and abstract deadlines will follow shortly.

Keep a lookout.

AAS Scientific Showcase Seminars

Please join us virtually every alternative **Thursdays from 1-2pm AEST** for our AAS Scientific Showcase Seminars Series. It is a great way to keep in touch with colleagues and the latest research. Below are the upcoming seminars:

AAS ONLINE SEMINAR SERIES 2022 JUNE – AUGUST SPEAKERS		
16 th June	Dr. Danielle Kamato	Dr. Denuja Karunakaran
30 th June	A/Prof. Elizabeth Tarling	A/Prof. Thomas Vallim
14 th July	Dr. Jiawen Li	Dr. Zi (Sophia) Gu
28 th July	Prof. Stephen Nicholls	
18 th August	Dr. Jesse Williams	
25 th August	Prof. Jacob George	Prof. Leon Adams

Every alternate Thursday, 1 – 2 pm AEST

Zoom link: <https://unimelb.zoom.us/j/86074935809>

*We would like to acknowledge **Amgen** for their support as the Atherosclerosis Education Program **Gold Sponsor**.*

Joanne Tan, AAS Program Coordinator.

On behalf of the AAS Program Committee: Dr. Blake (University of New South Wales), Prof. Judy de Haan (Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute), Dr. Man Kit Sam Lee (Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute) & Prof. Carl Schultz (University of Western Australia).

The **AAS 2022 Atherosclerosis Education Program** - which consists of the Scientific Showcase Seminars, the Annual Scientific Meeting, the Clinical Masterclass and the FH Summit would not be able to proceed without the support of our education partners.

*We would like to acknowledge and thank **Amgen** for their support as the Atherosclerosis Education Program **Gold Partner**. Thanks also to **Sanofi** and **Novartis**, **Bronze Partners**.*



Do you have some exciting news to share with the AAS community?

We'd love to hear updates and news from our members - be it a grant or a recent paper or just a lab highlight or achievement (pictures welcomed!). Please send it to admin@athero.org.au. Thank you.

Dr Denuja Karunakaran, Editor

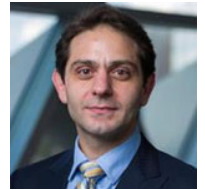


Member Spotlight

Have you ever wondered what the secret to a scientist's success is? How did they arrive at their pinnacle of success? What makes them tick? Who are they really? Find out more in our new 'Member Spotlight' series. Let us know what you think or who you would like to learn more about.

Meet A/Prof Peter Psaltis

Clinical Scientist at SAHMRI and Cardiologist at Royal Adelaide Hospital are a few of his titles. His love for football, truth and translational research sets this scientist off to discover new therapeutics. What's his biggest challenge?



What has been the biggest challenge you have faced during your career-to-date, and what lessons can young researchers learn from your experience? My greatest challenge has always been to find the right balance in everything I do.....the right balance between life and work, between my clinical responsibilities as an interventional Cardiologist and my academic pursuits in basic science and between my perfectionism and the need for practicality. My advice to young researchers is to pursue things that you enjoy, are interested in and passionate about. Concentrate on what you are doing now and why you are doing it, and don't get too distracted by the final destination, or what others are doing around you.

What currently excites you in the field of atherosclerosis? And where do you see the future of atherosclerosis research in Australia. I've been extremely proud by the way that atherosclerosis researchers in Australia have supported and encouraged each other during what has been a trying 2-3 years. There seems to be a lot of good will for different groups to collaborate on exciting projects. With our basic science and clinical communities working synergistically together, we are much better placed to translate great discoveries and innovations to patient care.

I'm especially excited by the wave of new therapeutic possibilities that are on our doorstep to treat residual risk (e.g. lipids, inflammation, metabolic disease) in patients with aggressive atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease. Australia has some outstanding contributors in this space.

What is your one advice for Australian Atherosclerosis Emerging Leaders/Scientists? As researchers, we are ultimately truth seekers. Often the truth takes time, great effort and struggle to find. Pay attention to your data and don't get overly disappointed if your findings don't fit the initial hypothesis. If the experiments were designed and executed well, then the results will still be valuable. In my experience, the least expected results were the game-changers that were most worthy of pursuing further.



What fun activities or hobbies do you do outside of the lab?

I'm blessed to have four wonderful kids (aged 7 to 19) with my beautiful wife, Maria. Family time is very precious to me. When time permits, family hikes are a favourite for us. I've always tried to keep fit and active, and have loved introducing my son, Jimmy (currently a second year Med student) to the gym in recent months. Finally, there's the unfortunate obsession I have with the Port Adelaide Football Club, which is now in danger of being superseded by my rapidly growing passion for the Milwaukee Bucks of the NBA (courtesy of the Greek Freak, Giannis Antetokounmpo!)

Meet Prof Andrew Murphy



Andrew heads the Haematopoiesis & Leukocyte Biology Lab at Baker Institute. Today, he sails through his experiences in research, his career trajectory and the need for better funding to support translational research in CVD. What's his advice for future atherosclerosis researchers?

What has been the biggest challenge you have faced during your career-to-date, and what lessons can young researchers learn from your experience? Mine was probably at the very start of my career. I didn't have a great undergrad (too much time spent at the beach, that's the problem with doing undergrad in Brisbane) and I only got a H2A (79.9%) for honours. So I had to work as an RA for a year and it took me many years to shake the low mark before I started to get funded. I think what it taught me was to keep at it if you enjoy science. That if you work hard and smart, things will happen. With each year, as your career grows you're faced with new challenges, managing a team, time challenges, work/life balance. When you have children it changes the way you work, the amount of time you can spend, how you prioritise things. My view for the early stages of your career is to do as much as you can, while you can (before life commitments start adding up). Each day was like sprinting a marathon, it's tough, it's draining and you have to make sacrifices, but it will pay off in the long term. Collaborate as much as you can, within your lab and external, having a number of joint first or senior publications is beneficial and can be an efficient way to do science.

What currently excites you in the field of atherosclerosis? And where do you see the future of atherosclerosis research in Australia. Atherosclerosis has been extensively studied as a lipid disorder and we have obviously seen the results from the various lipid lowering therapies. However, the immunological processes in the pathogenesis of the disease and the role following a myocardial infarction is extremely important. Learning more about these mechanisms could change the way atherosclerosis is managed in the future. I've always thought of atherosclerosis as an autoimmune disorder and there is emerging evidence to suggest this is the case. Given the immune system is so important to everyday life and co-morbidities can have a large impact on the immune system, this needs to be approached carefully. Thus, understanding the precise mechanism(s) will be critical to avoid unwanted complications and negative clinical trials due to poor study design.

The future for atherosclerosis research in Australia feels like it is almost at a crossroads. I think we have some incredibly gifted researchers, doing innovative science, particularly fundamental biology. However, we are starting to be left behind as I don't believe the clinical side is as engaged (with the exception of a few clinician/scientists) to explore these novel discoveries compared to investigators in the US or Europe. Having seen how competitive funding is and the lack of fundamental biologists in cardiovascular research securing Investigator, Ideas grants and NHF applications suiting clinicians, the avenues to keep the field funded are becoming more limited. The ACvA is playing an important role in trying to advocate for more funding. However, we still need fundable avenues that allow and encourage us to make discoveries in cardiovascular biology that may not have an immediate translational path, but will stimulate new areas of research to be bold, transformative and thus pave the way for future therapies.

What is your one advice for Australian Atherosclerosis Emerging Leaders/Scientists? Be different, find your niche. For those of you doing postdocs, make sure you have a number of projects, some high risk, some more solid and try to team up with others in your group, or groups you collaborate with to get as many publications as possible. There are many boxes we need to tick as scientists these days (too many really), it becomes very distracting and takes a lot of time away from research. But fundamentally, when it comes down to being fundable or not, publications (first and last author) is still the most valuable currency. The other bit of advice is to be involved (collaborate, network, be on committees, etc), from a lab, institute, state, national level (international if possible). Make yourself known so when people are thinking of inviting speakers to meetings, reviewing grants, etc you're familiar. Finally, be kind, open and accepting of others, we are all in this for the greater good!



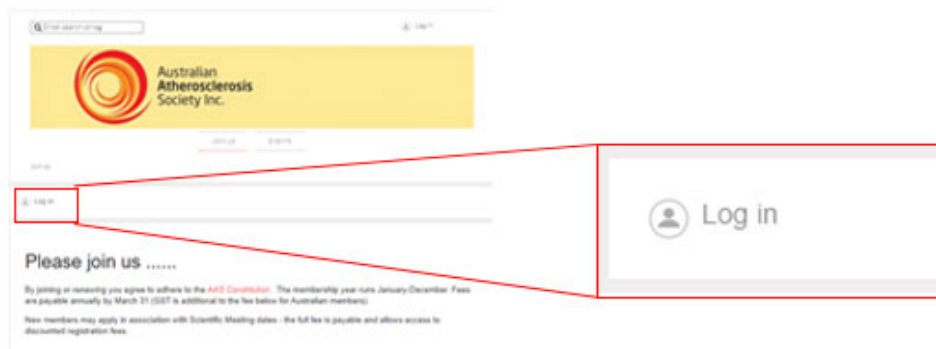
What fun activities or hobbies do you do outside of the lab?

I enjoy sailing, when I get the time and when it's not freezing in Melbourne (so that's maybe a few times a year, it was much easier when I lived in QLD). It's something I have done since I was about 6 or 7. I raced competitively for many years, against people that have now won gold medals at the Olympics. Now days, it's just for fun, trying to get my girls interested.



Regular reminders

- Membership renewals – reminders and lapsed membership notices will be sent automatically each year on March 01.
 - Please note: membership fees were increased to \$100+GST for full members at the 2021 AGM. No change to student fees.
- Members are entitled to **AAS travel grants** (closing dates: April 30, Nov 01). Click [here](#) for information and application.
- Log into member-only [portal](#) to access member information and seminar videos.



You'll get to this page <https://ausatherosoc.wildapricot.org/Sys/Login>.

Login will require your email address and a password. If you have not set up a password, click the 'Forgot Password' link and follow the prompts.

Please make sure you allow emails from admin@athero.org.au into your email system, so you don't miss any important news. There is also an app – Wild Apricot for Members, downloadable from Google Play or the Apple store.

AAS on Social Media

AAS have been actively interacting with AAS members and friends of AAS in the cardiovascular research community over social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

We now have 301 followers on Twitter, 98 connections on LinkedIn, and 153 followers on Facebook. We have been regularly advertising our weekly seminars over these platforms to reach out to as many Cardiovascular researchers as possible.

We would like to further engage our members through social media, so please add your Twitter handle to your profile in the Members Portal. And tag us in your posts ([@atheroaustralia](#)).

We love to see what our members are up to. Got a new paper or other exciting

