



Dear Colleagues,

We welcome you to the September, 2020 edition of AAS e-News. This newsletter will provide updates on the followings:

- Unforeseen challenges due to COVID-19 pandemic
- AAS Virtual Seminar series
- Joint ASM 2021
- Call for nomination for AAS Executive Committee positions
- Membership Renewal
- Upcoming Conferences

**Abdul Waheed Khan, Editor**



### **Unforeseen challenges due to COVID-19 pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected all fields of human life worldwide. The society had to regrettably announce that it will not be able to proceed with this year's Clinical Masterclass Meetings or the Joint Annual Scientific Meeting (a decision made together with The Australian Vascular Biology Society and High Blood Pressure Research Council). Both meetings have been deferred until similar dates in 2021.

Unfortunately, the economic fall-out of COVID-19 has been significant for the AAS. After much deliberation and consultation with senior membership of the society, the executive committee has made the difficult decision to part ways with IdeasPharm Pty Ltd / Your Secretariat, effective from September 2020. This decision was made unanimously by the committee members on economic grounds. Your Secretariat has provided secretarial and administrative support for the AAS since 2015, and we are especially grateful for the professionalism and excellent service provided by Natasha Whitwell during this time. We sincerely thank Natasha and her team and wish them well.



### AAS Virtual Seminar series

The path forward for the remainder of 2020 and into 2021 will continue to be challenging. In the absence of our traditional face-to-face, flagship meetings, we have introduced a regular “Virtual” seminar program fortnightly for the rest of this year with the plan being for weekly in 2021. This involves a fortnightly, invited digital presentations delivered “live” that will contain basic science, translational or clinical content in a rotating manner.

#### Time, frequency and duration:

Every alternate Thursday started from 7<sup>th</sup> of August at 1-2PM AEST

Virtual attendance of the seminars is **free**

Zoom Link to the seminars: <https://unsw.zoom.us/j/94025779568>

Registration: No registration required, just turn up using the above Zoom link

#### Plenary lecture:

We are delighted to announce that we will have a Plenary lecture presented by Professor Jason C Kovacic in our Virtual Seminar series (30<sup>th</sup> of October, 2020, Save the date). Professor Kovacic has been appointed as the new Executive Director of the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute in March 2020. Most recently, Jason Kovacic was the Professor of Medicine and Acting Director of the Mount Sinai Cardiovascular Research Centre in New York.



Professor Kovacic graduated from The University of Melbourne Medical School in 1994, and then undertook residency and cardiology specialty training in interventional cardiology at St Vincent’s Hospital in Sydney, becoming a Fellow of The Royal Australasian College of Physicians in 2003. Jason then completed a PhD in cardiovascular medicine at the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute.

In 2007, he was elected as a Fellow of The American College of Cardiology and relocated to the USA, to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Maryland. At the NIH, Jason discovered critical new pathways that lead to blockage of the body’s blood vessels. Jason then moved to The Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York. In parallel with his vital ongoing research to define new ways to prevent and treat vascular disease, Jason is a practicing clinical cardiologist, specializing in vascular disease and blockages of the heart arteries.

He has authored numerous scientific and clinical papers on heart and vascular disease and serves on a number of NIH committees. He has a particular interest in unraveling the pathobiology of the vascular diseases, fibromuscular dysplasia, Spontaneous Coronary Artery Dissection (SCAD) and Coronary Artery disease (CAD). Multiple genes and single nucleotide polymorphism (SNPs) are shown to be associated with CAD, however, the mechanisms of the effect of these genes and SNPs are unknown. To address these concerns, Jason and his team have developed a unique informatics pipeline in their recent article in the journal “Atherosclerosis” (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.atherosclerosis.2020.08.013>). This pipeline disclosed several potential mechanisms underlying a cluster of ZEB2-associated CAD risk



SNPs. This pipeline can serve as a roadmap to understand other complex CAD risk loci, and complex SNP-gene-tissue-phenotype relationship.

### **Joint Annual Scientific Meeting 2021**

We are delighted to announce that the 2021 Annual Scientific Meeting will be a joint meeting of three major scientific societies, High blood pressure Council of Australia (HBPRCA), Australian Vascular Biology Society (AVBS) and Australian Atherosclerosis Society (AAS).  
Date: December 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Venue: RACV City Club, 501 Bourke Street, Melbourne

Mark your diaries now for a fantastic week of science and networking opportunities. Stay tuned for further details on our website, Twitter and FB.

### **Call for nomination for AAS Executive Committee positions**

The following positions are open for nomination on the AAS Executive Committee effective from the AGM coming up in December.

President-elect – 1 year term (before taking up Presidency in 2022)

Secretary - 3 year term

Director - 2 year term (it is expected that more than one new Director will be appointed)

The AAS is seeking highly motivated nominees who are prepared to be “hands on” and hard-working in helping to run our society. In addition to regular attendance at committee teleconferences (typically every 1-2 months), each committee member is expected to contribute actively to one or more portfolios (e.g. administrative and financial oversight; membership engagement and renewal; attracting sponsorship; planning of online seminar series and major face-to-face meetings; social media). Nominees need to be financial members.

### **Membership Renewal:**

All members are reminded to renew their membership. Please ensure you renew membership ASAP and update your details.

The benefits of being AAS member include:

- Registration subsidies for the annual AAS meeting
- Student travel subsidies to the annual AAS meeting
- Automatic membership of the International Atherosclerosis Society (IAS)
- Members of the IAS are eligible for a reduced personal subscription to the IAS affiliated journal *Atherosclerosis*, which published monthly.
- Members may apply to the Australian atherosclerosis Trust Fund for assistance to attend international meetings, or for collaborative work both nationally and internationally



- National Lipid Association (NLA): All members of AAS are entitled to special privileges from NLA- a Complimentary subscription to the NLA, 2 years of access to
- the journal of Clinical Lipidology (digital format only), a subscription to the lipid Spin and access to the NLA website.

### Upcoming Conferences

We would like to update you on some upcoming interesting National/international virtual conferences:

#### **European Atherosclerosis Society Congress:**

88<sup>th</sup> EAS Congress 2020 is now in an innovative virtual format October, 04-07, 2020. Registration is free.



#### ❖ **Australasian Diabetes Congress 2020 (ADS/ADEA Annual Scientific Meeting):**

Online Virtual Meeting, 11-13th November 2020

#### ❖ **Scientific Session 2020, American Heart Association (AHA):**

A Virtual Experience  
November 13-17, 2020

#### ❖ **CSANZ Virtual 2020:**

68<sup>th</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting of the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand  
This meeting will be held virtually and in-person at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre from 11-13 December, 2020.

