



Australian
Atherosclerosis
Society Inc.

Happy New Year and welcome to what should be an exciting 2017! This e-news recaps what was a very successful Joint Meeting with AVBS and HBPRCA in Hobart and congratulates the winners of the awards and the Young Investigator Commended paper award. We also have 2 wonderful reports from those that have benefited from both the Trust awards and 2 PhD research opportunities. Best of luck to all those busily writing and submitting grant and fellowship applications!

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Belinda Di Bartolo, Editor



AAS Executive Committee 2017

Please see below the results of the recent elections and the new line up for the AAS Executive in 2017. Congratulations to Christina Bursill for being elected to President-Elect. We also welcome Natalie Ward and Anna Calkin to the board. Moving on from their terms as of the 2016 ASM will be Mary Kavurma, Dmitri Sviridov and Heather Medbury. We sincerely thank each of you for your dedicated efforts during your term on the Executive.

President	Trevor Mori
Pres Elect	Christina Bursill
Secretary	Peter Meikle
Treasurer	Natalie Ward
Director	Anna Calkin
Director	Stephen Nicholls
Director	Helen Williams
Editor	Belinda Di Bartolo
FHAN	Gerald Watts
YI rep	Aliki Rasmiena

AAS annual scientific meeting

The AAS annual scientific meeting was held as a joint meeting with the High Blood Pressure Research Council of Australia (HBPRCA) and the Australian Vascular Biology Society (AVBS) from December 7th-10th at the Grand Chancellor Hotel in Hobart, Tasmania. It was attended by over 200 delegates, many of who are members of more than one of the societies. Not having to choose between which society meeting to attend, and getting the broader range of topics was an advantage that many appreciated.



The invited speakers for AAS included our international speaker: Prof. John-Pierre Després from Laval University Canada (pictured with Trevor), and our two national speakers, A/Prof. Jonathon Shaw from the Baker IDI, and Prof. Craig Anderson from the University of Sydney and George Institute. It was great to also benefit from hearing the invited speakers from the other societies.

The meeting began with a Young Investigator/ ECR symposium, that they organised themselves, and we thank Dr Aliko Rasmiena for her contribution to this. She is your 'New Investigator' representative on the AAS Executive Committee. Topics covered included media training, resume writing, research translation and career development.

The sessions were well attended, and of special note, is how well attended the poster sessions were. So much so, that we will need to re-think how we run the moderated poster sessions in future so that everyone can see what is being presented.

The quality of talks was very high. Well done to all the students and young investigators. In particular, we say congratulations to the award winners who were as follows. Student oral prize: Dragana Dragoljevic YI oral prize: Adele Richart, Student poster prize: Valentina Ho and the YI poster prize: Blake Cochran who we also congratulate for winning the AAS Best Commended Paper Award.



The venues, for the conference and dinner, were wonderful with water views, and equally wonderful food. Overall the meeting went well and thank you to those who provided feedback which will help with future planning.

Thanks to Mary Kavurma (AVBS) and Anne Barden (HBPRCA) with whom the program was planned, and many thanks to Your Secretariat who did a huge amount of background organisation and ran the meeting smoothly. And of course, the meeting could not have been held without our sponsorship, and we thank them all for their vital role in making the meeting possible.

The next meeting will be somewhere in the greater Sydney region... the third week in October... so mark your calendars now. I hope to see you there.

Valentina Ho – I was given an amazing opportunity to attend the AAS Joint Annual Scientific Meeting. It was an incredible platform to learn from many researchers of various fields. I am an honors student at the University of Tasmania, Menzies Institute for Medical Research supervised by Dr Costan Magnussen and Dr Feitong Wu. My research used data from the Childhood Determinants of Adult Health (CDAH) study to examine the association between childhood breakfast skipping and adult blood pressure. We found that children who skipped breakfast had higher diastolic blood pressure in adulthood. This observation suggested that regular breakfast consumption in childhood could potentially have long-term benefits for cardiovascular health. It was my first time attending a conference and it was even more memorable being selected to give a moderated poster presentation. It was a great pleasure to share the room with so many brilliant minds where we can get acquainted and acquire knowledge.



Dragana Dragolijevic – I completed my Bachelor of Biomedical Sciences at Monash University, before completing my honours at Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute. My PhD focuses on exploring why patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) have ~2-3 times increased risk of CVD, which cannot be explained by traditional risk factors such as dyslipidemia. Our lab focuses on haematopoiesis, and how augmented white blood cell production, particularly monocytes, contribute to atherosclerosis. Indeed, both patients and murine models of RA exhibit monocytosis. In addition, we have shown that inflammatory arthritis prevents atherosclerotic lesion regression independent of circulating cholesterol levels. We are currently exploring the mechanisms of enhanced monocyte production, and how attenuating monocyte levels can affect atherosclerosis in RA. We hope to provide insight into the increased CV risk in RA. It was an exciting opportunity to attend the AAS national meeting and present our work. It was a great experience, especially with the involvement of AVBS and HBRCA, which provided me the opportunity to listen and learn from some of the leading researches in Australia.

Adele Richart –

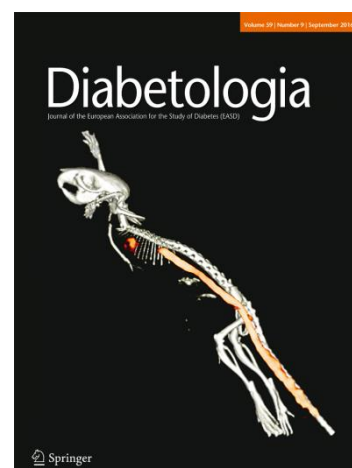
AAS Young Investigator Commended Paper Award – Blake Cochran

This \$500 award was initiated by members of the AAS Young Investigator Committee in recognition of an outstanding publication by a young investigator member of the AAS community. The award was presented at the Joint Scientific Meeting between AAS, HBPRCA, AVBS in Hobart 7th-10th December 2016.

The recipient of this award was Dr Blake Cochran for his paper "**In vivo PET imaging with [(18)F]FDG to explain improved glucose uptake in an apolipoprotein A-I treated mouse model of diabetes.**"

Cochran, B. J., W. J. Ryder, A. Parmar, S. Tang, A. Reilhac, A. Arthur, A. Charil, H. Hamze, P. J. Barter, L. Kritharides, S. R. Meikle, M. C. Gregoire and K. A. Rye (2016). *Diabetologia* **59**(9): 1977-1984.

This study used 18F-FDG and PET/CT imaging, in collaboration with ANSTO and the National Imaging Facility, to measure impact of apoA-I treatment on the real-time kinetics of glucose metabolism in the skeletal muscle of diabetic mice. An image from this study is featured on the cover of the September issue of *Diabetologia*



AAS Trust Awards – Eligibility Criteria

The AAS Trust Travel Awards are to assist with travel to an international conference. Applicants must apply in the Round in which their conference date falls. Applicants will be able to receive funds retrospectively. Applications will be assessed together and ranked by the Trustees after the close of each Round. The successful applicants will have been ranked as the top two in each Round. Consideration will be given to the prestige of the conference, its alignment with the aims and mission of the AAS and the type of presentation that is being given (i.e. poster/oral). Applicants must show evidence of abstract acceptance and presentation type.

Eligibility criteria

1. Must be a current financial member and a member for at least 2 consecutive years
2. Currently enrolled in a PhD or less than 10 years postdoctoral
3. Less than 5 years postdoctoral for medical graduates

Two travel awards will be available every 6 months valued up to a maximum value of \$1500 each.

Round one: for travel between January 1st and June 30th. **Applications close on April 30th.**

Round two: for travel between July 1st and December 31st. Applications close on November 1st.

American Heart Association Scientific Sessions November 12th – 16th 2016, New Orleans, Louisiana

I am highly appreciative of the Australian Atherosclerosis Society Travel Grant for providing the funding that allowed me to participate the American Heart Association (AHA) Scientific Sessions 2016 in New Orleans. AHA Scientific Sessions is one of the largest gatherings of scientists and healthcare professionals devoted to the science of cardiovascular disease (CVD) and stroke and the care of patients suffering from these diseases. It attracts nearly 18,000 professional attendees from more than 100 countries each year. This event features five days of the best in science and cardiovascular clinical practice covering all aspects of basic, clinical, population and translational science. The scope and quality of the scientific exchange made Scientific Sessions the premier cardiovascular research and instructional meeting in the world.



The first day of the meeting was mainly for early career researcher, with lectures, workshops and activities for the promotion of networking, scientific outreach, career building and mentorship. There were also the “Late-Breaking Clinical Trials” sessions in each of the 3 subsequent days, with reports of the latest findings from clinical trials. For example, the HOPE-3 trial showed no effect of blood pressure and cholesterol lowering on cognitive decline. The GLAGOV trial showed a significant effect of evolocumab, a PCSK9 inhibitor, on regression of coronary atherosclerosis in statin-treated patients, whereas the MILANO-PILOT trial showed no effect of the apolipoprotein A-I_{Milano} HDL mimetic on regression of coronary atherosclerosis. One of the highlights of the AHA Scientific Sessions was the Nobel Laureate Lecture given by Prof James Rothman on his work about vesicle trafficking. His talk was very inspiring. There were also some lectures on recent advances in HDL research, development of lipid-lowering medications, CVD prevention, precision medicine and CVD biomarkers, etc.

My abstract, entitled “The relationship of lipids and lipoprotein distribution with depressive symptoms: The Multi-Ethnic Study of Atherosclerosis” was accepted for presentation at a rapid fire oral session at the meeting. This presentation attracted significant interest from the audience. As a member of the AHA’s Council of Epidemiology and Prevention, I also attended the annual dinner of this council. My contribution and achievement on CVD research was recognized by the council and I was elected as a Fellow of the American Heart Association (FAHA) this year.

Overall, I found this to be an extremely valuable experience.

Until next time, auf wiedersehen Austria!

XXVII World Congress of the International Union of Angiology, 5-8th October 2016, Lyon, France

I recently attended the XXVII World Congress of the International Union of Angiology (IUA, 5-8th October, Lyon, France) with the support of a 2016 AAS Trust Travel Grant.

This conference was a convergence of vascular physicians, surgeons and biologists specialising in different aspects of vascular disease. I was invited to present an oral on my work entitled “Monocyte counts and phenotype in cardiovascular disease” for which I won the award for best presentation in my session. Presenting my work to experts has helped to strengthen my international profile and has laid foundations for future collaboration. Additionally, during my trip I also presented my work at a ‘Mighty Medic’ meeting (Rome, Italy) leading to more connections who are eager to collaborate in future.



In addition to expansion of networks, the conference hosted brilliant presentations in a variety of sessions, which covered many aspects of vascular disease. I especially enjoyed increasing my knowledge in the sessions “Peripheral arterial disease in Europe” and “Vascular diseases: Particularities in women” which emphasised the impacts of vascular diseases on women and the diversity of PAD experiences throughout Europe. This clinical insight is invaluable in understanding the diseases on which we hope to have an impact.

After sessions, there was time to explore the beautiful Tete d’Or park. Though the most memorable experience would have to be the conference dinner, which was held at Paul Bocuse’s Abbaye De Collonges. The carnival-themed atmosphere was dazzling, completed by the giant fairground organ which, at the conclusion of the night, played while an impressive (and ongoing) stream of dessert-bearing waiters ran down the stairs to serve us.

Overall, attendance at the IUA conference coupled with the Mighty Medic meeting has allowed me to grow my networks and share my work with a wide range of scientists and clinicians and I greatly appreciate the support of the AAS trust travel grant.

PhD Opportunities – Curtin University

One or two three-year PhD position(s) is open at Curtin Health Innovation Research Institute (CHIRI), Curtin University, Western Australia, within a team led by Professor John Mamo (Director of CHIRI) and Dr Ryu Takechi (Senior Research Fellow funded by National Health and Medical Research Council). The laboratory is exploring the aetiology of neurodegenerative disorders including Alzheimer’s disease by using several unique animal models as well as in clinical trials. The research focus of the team has been primarily on dietary modulation of cerebral capillary blood-brain barrier integrity in relation to neuronal

oxidative stress, neuroinflammation, neurodegeneration and neurocognitive function. Key experimental technologies utilized by the team are: quantitative confocal immunomicroscopy; flow cytometry; lipidomics; proteomics; MRI-PET scanning; and other biochemical assays.

Research Project

There are two prospective projects that may be offered. One project will focus on the prevention and restoration of cognitive deficits that are associated with diabetes. Diabetes mellitus is reported to induce cognitive impairment and increase the risk of dementia by 5-fold, while its underlying mechanisms are unknown. The other project is to investigate the cerebral vitamin D homeostasis and metabolism.

Research Environment

CHIRI represents the flagship biomedically focussed health and medical research activities of Curtin University, located on the main Bentley Campus of Curtin University, in the metropolitan area of Perth, Western Australia. Curtin is Western Australia's largest university and hosts approximately 60,000 students. The institute hosts approximately 150 research staff and postgraduate students as well as quality assured state-of-art biotechnological platforms.

Remuneration

The successful applicant will receive a scholarship equivalent to Australian Postgraduate Award (AU\$26,288 for 3 years with a possible extension up to 6 months).

Applicants Eligibility

- The applicant(s) must meet the enrolment eligibility indicated by the School/Faculty (i.e. a degree in Honours or Masters in a relevant discipline).
- The applicant(s) with experiences in the aforementioned key experimental techniques are desirable but not essential.

Application

Please submit your CV with full list of academic qualifications/records and research outputs. Please include a brief statement on your previous laboratory experiences and competency.

Enquiry and Submission

Please submit your enquiry and application for the position to Dr Ryu Takechi (R.Takechi@curtin.edu.au)

Upcoming Conference Information

The 3rd World Congress on Clinical Lipidology will take place in Brisbane, Australia on 10-12 February, 2017. The 2017 Congress will cover the state of the art educational lectures in the



field of clinical lipidology, focusing on practical lipid management including difficult to treat hyperlipidemias, genetic dyslipidemias, screening, dietary and nutraceutical approaches and case studies. Major emphasis will be given to new therapeutics, diagnosis and management of high risk patients.

Register now for Clinical Lipidology and Join us in Brisbane where prominent speakers will exchange their updated information and guidelines in the treatment of lipid disorders.

The 85th European Atherosclerosis Society Congress will be held in Prague, April 23-26, 2017. The meeting will build bridges between today's research and tomorrow's therapies in the diagnosis and treatment of atherosclerosis and related vascular disease. The historical city of Prague is a picturesque setting for the meeting; its charming bridges symbolising the progress in the field as world-leading experts come together to inform and inspire.



KEY DATES

September 4, 2016
Abstract submission opens

November 28, 2016
Abstract submission deadline

February 13, 2017
Early registration deadline

March 27, 2017
Regular registration deadline

FUSION
CONFERENCES LIMITED

Immune Mechanisms of Atherosclerosis Conference
11 March - 14 March 2016
Mexico
REGISTRATION DEADLINE: 13 JANUARY 2017

Ziad Mallat (Chair) and Christoph Binder (Co-Chair) look forward to welcoming you to the Fiesta Americana Condesa, Cancun, Mexico from March 11-14, 2017.

<https://www.fusion-conferences.com/conference54.php>

Australian Cardiovascular Alliance



The ACvA officially launched on Tuesday November 24th, 2015 to learn more about this important initiative, read the press release and become a member, visit www.ozheart.org.au