

## Quick Update:

- Membership: 800 members
- Save the Date:
  - COGNO AGM, 2020 (virtual)
  - 13<sup>th</sup> COGNO ASM, 2021
- Increasing trials portfolio



# COGNO

COOPERATIVE TRIALS GROUP  
FOR NEURO-ONCOLOGY

# Member Newsletter

Issue 33

Winter 2020



## Message from our Chair

Dear COGNO members,

Since our newsletter in April this year, our view has brightened in Australia, even as the rest of the world continues to struggle with COVID-19. We've even reached a new milestone in COGNO membership numbers: welcome to our 800th COGNO member - Dr Peter Lau, Medical Oncologist from Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. As a healthcare worker, I am grateful that we have been able to continue to give the best quality care to all our patients, and have not had to make the difficult decisions about rationing of resources that have been seen in the rest of the world - and would have undoubtedly

affected the brain cancer community.

These three months have taught us that we can change how we do things, including in patient care and clinical trials. Whilst a trial follow up by telehealth was unthinkable a year ago, trial management committees and ethics committees have taken pragmatic decisions for continuity. Hopefully, we will look back on this enforced change and recognise the moment that 'teletrials' became possible for COGNO and for other trials groups. We have also changed how we communicate within COGNO, and are revisiting the need for travel. A two hour Zoom meeting doesn't replace the collegiality of face to face contact, but it sure beats a 28 hour round trip to the Stamford Plaza Sydney Airport Hotel from the perspective of a Western Australian! By replacing some of our smaller regular teleconferences with videoconferencing, hopefully we can get some of the benefits of eye contact and body language when we interact with our colleagues.

I will end with a heartfelt thank you to everyone who has helped COGNO weather this difficult few months - those who have continued trial start up activities, kept studies open, recruited patients, written proposals and grants, and followed up study participants by phone or telehealth. Remarkably, COGNO has maintained momentum through this time. In the words of the philosopher Alan Watts: *The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance.*

Professor Anna Nowak MBBS FRACP PhD  
Group Chair

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## Save these Dates!

- **COGNO Annual General Meeting (virtual): Tuesday 20 October 2020**  
Further details will be circulated to COGNO members shortly.
- **13<sup>th</sup> COGNO Annual Scientific Meeting:**  
Brain Cancer 2021: Concepts to Cure  
Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> October - Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2021  
Melbourne, Australia  
Stay posted for further updates, or email [cognoasm@ctc.usyd.edu.au](mailto:cognoasm@ctc.usyd.edu.au) to join our mailing list.

## GETTING TO KNOW COGNO'S MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS



**Professor Hui Gan** is a member of COGNO's Management Committee, chair of COGNO's Scientific Advisory Committee, and lead investigator on COGNO's LUMOS study (Low & Intermediate Grade Glioma Umbrella Study of Molecular Guided Therapies).

Hui is also head of the Cancer Clinical Trials Unit at Austin Health (Melbourne), the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre (VCCC) research lead and education lead for brain cancer, co-director of the Olivia Newton-John Cancer Research Institute (ONJCRI) Centre for Research Excellence in Brain Tumours and clinical research lead across the ONJCRI.

An internationally recognised trial investigator, Hui has been involved with 10 drugs from ONJCRI that were successfully commercialised and continues to create and commercialise novel antibody therapeutics. Further biographical details available on <https://www.cogno.org.au/content.aspx?page=committees-mc>.

### **What impact has COVID-19 had on your day-to-day activities?**

The advent for COVID-19 initially resulted in urgent preparations to be able to scale-up should we have large numbers of COVID-19 requiring admission. Thankfully, Australia has been largely spared. Currently, we are cautiously resuming more normal activities whilst being vigilant.

### **How did you become involved in COGNO?**

A colleague and a friend, A/Professor Zarnie Lwin, introduced me to COGNO and her experience was so positive that it made me join.

### **Why are you still a COGNO member?**

On a personal level, it's the wonderful people that I work with in COGNO. On a professional level, COGNO is the professional body whose work aligns with my own professional aim - which is to do something to improve the survival of patient with brain tumours.

### **Why did you become a medical oncologist and what triggered your interest in neuro-oncology research?**

Neuro-oncology appealed as an area where I felt I could make a contribution, because it was an area where we urgently need improved outcomes given the lack of progress in the last 30 years, and it was one where my professional and research skills led me to believe that I could make a meaningful contribution.

### **What do you find most challenging about your work, and most rewarding?**

There are so many things I find interesting and I have to try and be disciplined and focused on the areas where I can make the best contribution. The most rewarding part is always the people....the amazing patients as they go through some of the hardest times of their life but who remain caring for others (some of them worry about me and my workload!!) and the wonderful colleagues in COGNO who support each other with warm, wisdom and large doses of irreverent humour.

### **How do you stay motivated to continue in your role?**

I don't focus on the negatives. I only focus on what I can control and what I can do.

### **What are you most proud of in your career?**

I am not sure it is pride but I am satisfied with my efforts to continually learn and innovate in pursuit of the my goals. This often means stretching to learn things/roles that are outside my comfort zone if it will make me more effective

### **What is a typical day for you?**

The first half of my week is very clinical and where I see my patients. The rest of the week is usually catching up with meetings and emails. All of this is fuelled by many cups of coffee and a fair bit of sugar.

### **What do you do in your 'spare' time?**

'Spare' time indeed. I consciously take time away from work for family, friends and food. I probably don't do as much of it as I should but I do enough. And I am supported by very supportive partner and family.

### **Away from work, how would you describe yourself?**

Hmm...a very sedentary Asian man who really loves his food (who should be obese as all hell given an unnatural love of salty and fatty foods like roast pork but was luckily blessed with an excellent metabolism from his parents), loves reading (but doesn't read as much as he would like) and is always up for coffee with friends.

### **What are you looking forward to in 2020?**

The end of coronavirus and being able to go to my favourite restaurants and shops again!

### **What are three things you want to achieve in 2020?**

Hard one. There are not necessarily finite goals mostly although LUMOS is something that I want to complete recruitment to this year and we are tracking well. But mostly, there are ongoing research programs that I am leading at Austin, ONJCRI and COGNO that I want to progress.

## STUDY & TRIAL UPDATES

### **ACED: Acetazolamide plus Dexamethasone versus dexamethasone alone in recurrent and/or progressive HGG**

The ACED study team would like to sincerely thank all the sites, participants and their caregivers and families for their generosity and support.

The sites were fantastic in their dedication and prompt action during our data cleaning activities, especially with the additional challenges of COVID-19 restrictions. All activities have been completed and an analysis is being conducted by our statistician.

We are excited to see what the data will reveal and hope that it will provide some insight into the use of dexamethasone dose in the management of raised intracranial pressure for patients with recurrent and/or progressive high grade glioma. We will keep you posted!

No.	Site Name	State	Principal Investigator	Site Status	Site Activation	# Patients Randomised
1	Liverpool Hospital	NSW	Eng-Siew Koh	Active	24-Jun-2016	14
2	Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital	QLD	Zarnie Lwin	Active	30-Sep-2016	4
3	St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne	VIC	Anthony Dowling	Active	14-Nov-2016	3
4	Epworth Healthcare	VIC	Ross Jennens	Active	20-Feb-2017	0
5	Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital	WA	Anna Nowak	Active	04-Apr-2017	3
6	Royal Hobart Hospital	TAS	Rosemary Harrup	Active	28-Aug-2017	3
7	Prince of Wales Hospital	NSW	Elizabeth Hovey	Active	16-Nov-2017	1
8	Chris O'Brien Lifehouse	NSW	Hao-Wen Sim	Active	12-Dec-2017	2
9	Flinders Medical Centre	SA	Ganessan Kichenadasse	Active	17-Jan-2018	0
10	St George Hospital	NSW	Tracey Dunlop	Active	14-Feb-2018	0
11	St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney	NSW	Cecelia Gzell	Active	20-Dec-2018	0
<b>Total Recruitment</b>						30

### **LUMOS: Low & Intermediate Grade Glioma Umbrella Study of Molecular Guided Therapies**

The LUMOS pilot study officially opened for recruitment from 21<sup>st</sup> April 2020. Two out of 5 sites have been activated with Olivia Newton-John Cancer Research and Wellness Centre (ONJCRI, Victoria) the first site activated and registering the first trial participant on 1st May 2020. The remaining 3 sites are at different stages of the study start-up. These sites are expected to be activated in the coming few months, depending upon their local COVID-19 related restrictions.

The recruitment target for this pilot study is 10 participants. We anticipate achieving this target over a period of 12 months from the study activation date. The LUMOS trial coordinator is more than happy to provide any information that you may require on this study, please email [lumos@ctc.usyd.edu.au](mailto:lumos@ctc.usyd.edu.au) with any queries.

No.	Site Name	State	Principal Investigator	Site Status	Site Activation	# Patients Registered
1	St Vincent's Hospital Sydney	NSW	Hao-Wen Sim	Start-up	-	-
2	Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre	VIC	Mark Rosenthal	Active	18-May-2020	-
3	Olivia Newton-John Cancer Research and Wellness Centre	VIC	Hui Gan	Active	21-Apr-2020	01
4	Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital	QLD	Zarnie Lwin	Start-up	-	-
5	Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital	WA	Anna Nowak	Start-up	-	-
<b>Total Recruitment</b>						01

**NUTMEG (COGNO 16/01): A Randomised Phase II Study of Nivolumab and TeMozolomide vs Temozolomide alone in newly diagnosed Elderly patients with Glioblastoma (NUTMEG)**

The NUTMEG trial aims to recruit 102 patients across up to 20 sites. Currently 19 out of the 20 selected sites have opened to recruitment, with 64 patients randomised onto the NUTMEG trial across all sites as of the 01st of June 2020.

Recruitment has remained stable over the past couple of months with an average of 3 patients randomised per month. We are hoping that recruitment will pick up, with the control of COVID-19 improving.

The NUTMEG trial coordinator is more than happy to provide any information that you may require on this study. Please email [nutmeg@ctc.usyd.edu.au](mailto:nutmeg@ctc.usyd.edu.au) if you have any queries.

No	Site name	State	Principal Investigator	Site status	Site activation	# Patients registered	# Patients enrolled
1	Royal North Shore	NSW	Michael Back	Active	22/02/2018	21	18
2	Prince of Wales Hospital	NSW	Elizabeth Hovey	Active	04/09/2018	3	2
3	Chris O'Brien Lifehouse	NSW	Hao-Wen Sim	Active	29/06/2018	4	3
4	Wollongong Hospital	NSW	Daniel Brungs	Active	24/01/2020	0	0
5	Gosford Hospital	NSW	Matthew Wong	Active	18/09/2018	4	4
6	Campbelltown Hospital	NSW	Annette Tognela	Active	19/02/2018	6	6
7	Port Macquarie Hospital	NSW	Stephen Begbie	Active	21/01/2019	4	2
8	Newcastle Private	NSW	Craig Gedye	Active	27/03/2018	1	1
9	Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre	VIC	Kathryn Field	Active	28/08/2018	1	1
10	Epworth Healthcare	VIC	Ross Jennens	Active	10/09/2018	5	5
11	Austin Hospital	VIC	Hui Gan	Active	22/07/2019	1	1
12	Monash Medical Centre	VIC	Andrew Strickland	Active	17/06/2019	0	0
13	Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital	QLD	Zarnie Lwin	Active	19/02/2018	11	7
14	Princess Alexandra	QLD	Katharine Cuff	Active	28/05/2018	4	4
15	ICON Cancer Foundation	QLD	Paul Eliadis	Active	26/11/2019	0	0
16	Royal Adelaide Hospital	SA	Hien Vinh Le	Active	22/1/2019	4	3
17	Flinders Medical Centre	SA	Anna Mislang	Active	12/06/2019	3	3
18	Sir Charles Gairdner	WA	Anna Nowak	Active	05/04/2019	6	4
19	Royal Hobart Hospital	TAS	Rosemary Harrup	Active	31/05/2018	0	0
20	DUKE University Medical Centre	USA	Margaret Johnson	Start-up	Pending	N/A	N/A
<b>Total recruitment</b>						<b>78</b>	<b>64</b>

**MAGMA: Multi-Arm GlioblastoMa Australasia trial**

MAGMA is a multi-arm multi-stage, multi-centre, phase III platform trial that aims to assess hypotheses against a common standard-of-care control arm for the management of people with glioblastoma. Initial questions of interest are:

Question 1 whether to give temozolomide as soon as possible following surgery prior to chemoradiotherapy  
 Question 2 whether to give a plan for 6 cycles of standard schedule adjuvant temozolomide chemotherapy after chemoradiotherapy, or continue temozolomide until progression.

This trial aims to recruit 300 patients for the first 2 questions across up to 27 sites in Australia and possibly New Zealand. The trial is currently in its start-up phase with 26 sites approached to run the study and aiming to open in Q3-Q4 2020. The trial team is currently in the process of developing the eCRF database and preparing study documentation for patient recruitment.

The MAGMA trial coordinator is more than happy to provide any information that you may require on this study, please email [magma@ctc.usyd.edu.au](mailto:magma@ctc.usyd.edu.au) if you have any queries.

**VERTU (COGNO 14/01): *VE*liparib, *R*adiotherapy and *T*emozolomide trial in *U*n methylated *M*GMT Glioblastoma. A Randomised Phase II study of veliparib + radiotherapy (RT) with adjuvant temozolomide (TMZ) + veliparib versus standard RT + TMZ followed by TMZ in patients with newly diagnosed glioblastoma (GBM) with unmethylated O (6)-methylguanine-DNA methyltransferase (MGMT).**

We are continuing to follow participants in the follow-up phase of the study until all study endpoints have been reached.

We are also actively reviewing and cleaning data in the lead up to the final analysis. Thank you to all sites who have been answering open queries and updating the database for the patients remaining on trial. For sites who have not be able to review the database, we kindly ask to continue to check and review any remaining open queries.

The VERTU trial coordinator is more than happy to provide any information that you may require on this study. Please email [vertu@ctc.usyd.edu.au](mailto:vertu@ctc.usyd.edu.au) if you have any queries.

## NEW CONCEPTS

### Do you have an idea for a potential study?

The COGNO SAC (Scientific Advisory Committee) meets via teleconference 3 times a year, and hosts an open, face-to-face meeting during the COGNO ASM. During the SAC meeting, new protocols are presented both by the proposer and also by the COGNO-appointed scientific and consumer reviewer/s before a wider discussion by SAC.

If you have a great idea you are welcome to contact the COGNO SAC to discuss how we can assist in concept development.

If you become aware of a funding opportunity during the year which might be of relevance to COGNO, or for which you would like to involve COGNO in your application, please do let us know! Under these circumstances, we can facilitate urgent COGNO SAC review and COGNO input to assist you in refining your proposal, building your team, and hopefully improving your chances of a successful application.

If you require any further information please email [kirston.barton@ctc.usyd.edu.au](mailto:kirston.barton@ctc.usyd.edu.au).

*Prof Hui Gan and Dr Eng-Siew Koh, on behalf of the COGNO SAC and COGNO community*

## COGNO STAFF UPDATE

We are pleased to welcome 2 new staff members to COGNO, Kirston Barton and Deepa Mathur.



Kirston joins us as the Research Development Lead for COGNO. She is an immunologist with a background in clinical genomics. Kirston completed her PhD at the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill and went on to complete an NIH postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Sydney, where she performed translational research on clinical trials. Following her postdoctoral work, she joined the Genomic Technologies team at the Garvan Institute where she focused on using emerging genomic technologies to develop clinical research projects in neurology and oncology.



Deepa joins our clinical trials team as the new Trial Operations Coordinator looking after the LUMOS and CATNON studies. She completed a Master of Science in Clinical Research from Cranfield University, United Kingdom, and has been in the clinical research industry for over 10 years. Deepa has worked with tertiary care hospitals as site coordinator and site manager, managed public health observational studies, industry sponsored and investigator-initiated clinical trials. She has experience of working with central laboratory as well. In addition to various phases of clinical trials (I-IV), she has extensive experience in working with pharmaceutical industry in large population-based post marketing studies.

## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Congratulations to Peter Lau, who became our 800<sup>th</sup> member in June. Help us expand our Group's expertise and networking capacity. If you know someone who would like to join, you can refer prospective members to our online membership application on our website ([www.cogno.org.au](http://www.cogno.org.au)) or office ([cogno@ctc.usyd.edu.au](mailto:cogno@ctc.usyd.edu.au)).

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- **Cancer care in the time of COVID-19: A conceptual framework for the management of cancer during a pandemic**

Cancer Australia has developed a new resource to support the optimal management of cancer during a pandemic. [Cancer care in the time of COVID-19: A conceptual framework for the management of cancer during a pandemic](#) explores approaches to cancer management in the different scenarios of the COVID-19 curves. The framework outlines the best practice principles for cancer care during a pandemic to support the ongoing delivery of consistent, safe, high-quality and evidence-based care for people with cancer, from prevention and early detection through to survivorship and end-of-life care. For more information, visit [canceraustralia.gov.au/cancer-care-in-the-time-of-COVID-19](http://canceraustralia.gov.au/cancer-care-in-the-time-of-COVID-19)

- **2020 Tom Reeve Award for Outstanding Contributions to Cancer Care - Call for Nominations**

The Tom Reeve Award, offered annually by COSA, formally recognises a national leader who has made a significant contribution to cancer care. Nominations are now open for the 2020 Tom Reeve Award for Outstanding Contributions to Cancer Care, closing **Monday 20 July 2020**. For more information, visit <https://www.cosa.org.au/grants-awards/tom-reeve-award/>

- **Sydney QOL Office Advice on Grant Applications with Patient-Reported Outcomes**

The Sydney Quality of Life Office has prepared a guideline specifically for use in Grant Applications with patient-reported outcome (PRO) endpoints (primary or secondary), in keeping with SPIRIT-PRO recommendations.

[Guidance for Grant Applications with PROs](#) contains advice and examples for properly addressing PROs in grant applications. QoL hopes you will find this useful in the upcoming grant rounds.

QoL remains committed to ensuring that all cancer clinical trials group members and staff developing studies with PROs continue to receive full support from the Quality of Life Technical Service.

Staff at the Sydney QOL Office are available to answer any [online queries](#) regarding the QOL/PRO aspects of your clinical research.

You can access a number of useful [resources on the QoL webpage](#), and if you would like more information, contact the [Sydney QOL Office](#).

## REMINDERS

- 28 August 2020: AGITG 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting, online meeting, <https://asm.gicancer.org.au/>
- 11-13 November 2020: COSA 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting, Brisbane, hybrid face-face and virtual meeting, <https://www.cosa2020.org/registration>
- 10-12 June 2021: ANZCHOG Annual Scientific Meeting, Melbourne, <https://anzchog.org/asm/>
- 24 - 26 Oct 2021: 13<sup>th</sup> COGNO Annual Scientific Meeting, Melbourne, <https://cogno.org.au/content.aspx?page=cognoasm-home>



### MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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 Prof Meera Agar  
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