

WA Health Translation Network

COVID-19 Research Collaboration

Minutes

Monday 2 June 2020, 3.00pm – 4.00pm

Via Zoom

<https://www.wahntn.org/wa-covid-19-research-coordination/>

1. Welcome and update

The Guiding document and lessons learnt has been shared and discussed with the WAHTN Executive Board members, who met on 27 May.

Minutes

The Minutes from this meeting and all previous meetings are circulated as quickly as possible and uploaded to the WAHTN COVID-19 website.

Website

The WAHTN website is continuing to be updated with over 150 views/access during the past week.

2. Funding

A total of \$3M funding has been received from WA Department of Health (\$1,895,377 for Project Grants and \$1,104,623 towards Infrastructure Grants) to progress the COVID-19 Research Collaboration. The breakdown of infrastructure funding is as follows:

FUNDING REQUEST	
CIVIC Project	\$300,000
CRR	\$304,623
Core Trial Management Team (CRR)	
Local Site Set Up (SMHS)	
Local Site Set Up (EMHS)	
Local Site Set Up (NMHS)*	
BIOBANKING - 12mths	\$500,000
Infrastructure & Staff	
TOTAL	\$1,104,623



The breakdown of project grants awarded is as follows:

Applicant	Institution	Project Title
Anstey, Matthew	Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital	West Australian APRV Ventilation Study (WAVES)
Edgar, Dale	Fiona Stanley Hospital	Life AfTER covid-19 (LATER-19): a prospective, longitudinal, cohort study of symptoms, physical function and psychological outcomes
Francis, Roslyn	University of Western Australia	Persistent lung and arterial inflammation following COVID pneumonia
James, Alan	Busselton Population Medical Research Institute	Mental health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and relationship to multimorbidity in a regional cohort of Baby-boomers
Kollmann, Tobias	Telethon Kids Institute on behalf of the Centre for Child Health Research, University of Western Australia	The BRACE Trial
Lipscombe, Richard	Proteomics International Pty Ltd	Protein Biomarkers for COVID-19 disease susceptibility/ response
Lipscombe, Richard	Proteomics International Pty Ltd	A rapid, non-invasive immunoassay-based diagnostic test for direct detection of the SARSCoV-2 virus
Lundin, Samuel	Biotome Pty Ltd	Development and implementation of a precision immunology test for SARS-CoV-2 immunity in the WA health care system
Pavey, Warren	Heart and Lung Research Institute of Western Australia	Sero-testing At Risk hospital Staff for SARS CoV2 (StARS Project)
Robinson, Owen	Murdoch University	Australasian COVID - 19 Trial (ASCOT)
Tai, Anna	University of Western Australia	Early Convalescent plasma Use in serious Respiratory infection to improve clinical outcomes amongst hospitalised patients with COVID -19 (CURE-COVID Trial) – A Prospective Pilot study
Veedu, Rakesh	Murdoch University	Novel molecular plugs for accurate SARS-CoV-2 paper test from swabs in minutes and for treating COVID-19
TOTAL	\$1,895,377	

The Project Grants were reviewed by a panel chaired by Professor Peter Klinken. As a result of Professor Klinken's involvement, further projects were able to be funded through other Government sources.

The Federal Minister for Health announced \$66million from MRFF funding for research into vaccine and treatments for COVID-19 and preparations for future pandemics. Gary Geelhoed encouraged members to contact him if there was an interest in collaborating. Link to the announcement is available here: <https://biotechdispatch.com.au/news/greg-hunt-announces-66-million-for-coronavirus-related-research>

3. Updates from Key Areas

COVID-19 Research Response (CRR) (Toby Richards)

The platform has been set up across all three metropolitan health sites.

Samples have been loaded onto OpenSpecimen. However, the CRR have not yet received any requests from researchers to utilise the samples.

The CRR are about to pivot the samples to those trials that are available, with an aim to complete amendments to ethics by the end of this week. Toby Richards encouraged those members that wish to be included to contact him as soon as possible.

It was noted that putting a stream of work to demonstrate a critical mass from Western Australia is a good idea. However, the focus on COVID-19 is not as clear given the limited samples WA have at this stage.

CIVIC (Chris Reid)

CIVIC is continuing to develop with 4 separate modules embedded within CIVIC. These are; CIVIC FIFO main; and 3 based around the industry target workforce (CIVIC FIFO, Rio FIFO; and Rio Safe CBD Cohort). With approx. 330 people participating in the surveys at present.

The next focus is around the mental health groups and the educational worker sector.

Mental Health (Sean Hood)

The mental health COVID-19 response panel have been meeting weekly, which is proving useful.

Sean Hood noted that this is a unique cross university and unified group. The challenge we have is funding projects to capitalise on this.

Peter Mcavoy has been leading the mental health measures standardisation project.

Mental health questionnaires have been distributed which specifically target education populations and health provider's which will ultimately feed into the CIVIC projects.

The digital telehealth platform is progressing and discussions with EY, Microsoft are continuing.

A mental health component application will be drafted and submitted to MRFF with regards to the funding opportunities announced by the Federal Minister for Health.

Australian National Phenome Centre (ANPC) (David Morrison)

Jeremy Nicholson was not available to attend, however David Morrison updated members on the ANPC.

The ANPC continues to build international linkages and due to this, a MoU has recently been signed with the University of Cambridge, School of Medicine, allowing a coordinated metabolic phenotyping research approach.

The International Phenome Centre Network has been established with the ANPC as the main hub. Collaborators are from a diverse range of countries (10 signed up to date) with the aim to share data and samples and harmonise protocols across the platforms.

Researchers have realised what the ANPC has to offer as numerous queries have been made, particularly with regards to samples.

A number of philanthropic funding and Ministerial opportunities will be announced over the coming weeks.

WA Department of Health (Darren Gibson)

The Future Fund has been passed in Parliament, with the process of enacting the Legislation currently in progress, it is anticipated that the Bill will be in Act by 1 July. This will allow the Department to access the \$6million which has been allocated to COVID-19 research. More news to follow on the process and further funding opportunities that may be available to support COVID-19 initiatives.

COVID-19 Immunity Collaboration (Dominic Mallon)

The Immunity Collaboration is represented by a range of a multi-disciplinary groups including; public health, infectious diseases and respiratory physicians; and clinical and research virologists.

The Group has no direct funding as yet but has been utilising in-kind support from the CRR and CIVIC platforms.

Collaborations and high level discussions have been established with various groups to demonstrate evidence of immune responses; convalescent immunity; therapeutic plasma and cellular immunity.

Consumer and Community (Ben Horgan)

An online training workshop was held with the Community Representative Pool focusing specifically on consumer involvement in COVID-19 research. It was a success and the CCHR team will schedule further online training workshops.

Ben Horgan advised that if researchers have any projects that require consumer involvement support get in contact.

Telehealth Collaboration Project (Pip Brennan and Fiona Wood)

A joint event is currently being organised focusing on telehealth and clinical markers. Organisers include Fiona Wood, Rob Newton and David Playford.

The event will be linking consumers, clinical experts, infrastructure, governance experts and innovators into a design workshop that is focusing on future e-health patient experience.

The workshop will likely be held on 18 June virtually and potentially face to face. It will be a fantastic opportunity to capture all of WA in the virtual space.

Busselton Population Study (Michael Hunter)

Recently awarded funding for the Mental health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and relationship to multimorbidity in a regional cohort of Baby-boomers.

The Intention is to survey the 5000 members within the Busselton cohort to identify the patterns of morbidity during the COVID-19 crisis within the cohort.

A comprehensive survey has been created which will take approx. 1.5 hours to complete.

Michael Hunter encouraged other collaborators to get involved as the intention is to dovetail into all current projects occurring in Western Australia.

EDICT Trial

Bruce Robinson was not available to attend, however, Gary Geelhoed updated members on the EDICT Trial which is set up for repurposed drugs to treat people at if it comes to the second wave of COVID-19 whilst patients are still at home and in isolation.

Broad collaboration with Europe, North America WHO and University of Indonesia.

4. Other Business

Peter Richmond mentioned that Linear Clinical Research will commence a phase 1 study with a COVID-19 vaccine in next couple of weeks. More information on this to follow as it progresses.

5. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be scheduled on Monday 15 June, 3pm.