

WA Health Translation Network

COVID-19 Research Collaboration

Minutes

Monday 13 July 2020, 3.00pm – 4.00pm

Via Zoom

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

1. Welcome and update

Gary Geelhoed gave a brief introduction and overview of current status in Western Australia highlighting the lack of cases but warning of the possibility of a second wave as in Victoria.

Minutes

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

2. Funding

Gary Geelhoed noted that there was nothing new to report with regards to funding. However, confirmed that the \$3million from the WA Department of Health has been distributed.

3. Updates from Key Areas

COVID-19 Immunity Collaboration (Dominic Mallon)

The COVID-19 Immunity Collaboration is making progress towards looking at patients with confirmed SARS CoV-2 and their close contacts.

Currently adjusting protocols to allow the collaboration to work from the Clinical Trials Unit located at the Harry Perkins Institute South building. In kind support has been received from the CRR and ANPC.

Alison Imrie awarded \$250k for neutralising antibody work.

In collaboration with the Kirby Institute (Sydney), Peter Doherty Institute (Melbourne) and the University of Adelaide, a submission will be made to MRFF for Immunity work. Alison Imrie and Martin French will be listed as CI's.

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

The CRR is focusing on supporting the Immunity Collaboration group, which is awaiting governance issues to be resolved.

Telethon Kids Institute (Jonathan Carapetis)

Jonathan Carapetis advised that the DETECT schools study stream is progressing well. He noted, that it has been a great project with the team managing to finalise Round 1 prior to School Holidays. At this early stage, the survey data is indicating interesting results related to stress.

The BRACE trial, Perth component has been completed, with approx. 1,900 healthcare workers have been enrolled to date.

The CoCo study has been reorientated due to low case numbers. The team are considering opportunities to offshore locations for data samples.

Australian National Phenome Centre (ANPC) (Jeremy Nicholson)

Jeremy Nicholson confirmed they are currently working on the Western Australian samples. The team have also made contact with other Universities around the world for sample and data analysis.

The ANPC is expecting to receive 1000 samples shortly from key collaborator, the University of Cambridge, School of Medicine, as part of the coordinated metabolic phenotyping research approach. In addition, further samples are being received from the USA, 8 European Universities and a Malaysian cohort with Dexamethasone trial arms, as well as Indigenous cohorts from the USA and Malaysia resulting in one of the largest sample collections available in the world.

Jeremy Nicholson provided information on COVID-19 and the extensive range of effects on human health, including heart disease, vascular disease, diabetes, liver disease and inflammatory processes.

The relation to diabetes and COVID-19 was discussed in detail and as the reversibility of effects of diabetes are unknown, more samples are required to effectively answer this question. Similar effects have been seen with SARS, but COVID-19 is showing this on a much larger scale given the higher numbers.

Jeremy Nicholson noted that the ANPC has made good progress in relatively short amount of time. The team have submitted their first two papers and are awaiting confirmation of acceptance, this would then be shared publically and available to researchers.

Receptor for Advanced Glycation End-products (Steve Wilton)

Steve Wilton advised that the RAGE work (Receptor for Advanced Glycation End-products) is taking on a different approach. This is a collaboration with Monash University, UWA and Murdoch initiative. RAGE is using exon skipping techniques, used in Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy research, to target COVID-19 in a soluble form.

Kevin Pflieger advised the complementary work that is occurring with UWA and has subsequently been developed into a Biotech Company.

Consumer and Community Involvement Program (CCIP) (Ben Horgan)

Ben Horgan advised that a webinar is scheduled on Thursday 16 July (10am - 11.30am) to deliver the results of consent survey (which received 200 + responses). The event will include a panel discussion with consumer and researchers represented.

It was noted that the team have formally changed their name to the Consumer and Community Involvement Program (CCIP), formally, the Consumer and Community Health Research Network (CCHRN) and that a new website has been launched.

4. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be scheduled in one month, Monday 10 August, 3.00pm – 4.00pm.