



Hypertension Australia

Annual Scientific Meeting Summary Report

Melbourne Business School,

29 November – 1 December 2023

Contents

Annual Scientific Meeting Overview	3
ECR Symposium	10
Women in Hypertension Session.....	10
BPOzKids: Blood Pressure in Australian Children	10
Speakers.....	11
HBPRCA Awards 2023	12
Sponsors	14

Annual Scientific Meeting Overview

In 2023, Hypertension Australia, formerly known as the High Blood Pressure Research Council of Australia, held its Annual Scientific Meeting at the Melbourne Business School, Carlton, VIC.

This meeting took place in-person only between 29th November and 1st of December with additional events and symposia scheduled around the main meeting. The ASM program was created once again by our amazing Joint Program Managers Dr. Bradley Broughton, Quynh Nhu Dinh and Hamdi Jama pictured below.



Please click [HERE](#) to view the PDF program of the Annual Scientific Meeting including all speakers and presentations.

A total of 77 abstracts, excluding invited speakers, were submitted for the meeting from the following states:

NSW	18
QLD	4
TAS	9
VIC	42
WA	4
SA	0

Feedback received from 2023 ASM obtained via the evaluation survey was critical to inform the format and program aspects of future meetings and ensure high membership satisfaction. An extract of major aspects raised is summarized below:

2023: Feedback received from the 2023 meeting attendees via the evaluation survey was overall very positive. Regarding content, 95% found the program interesting and 80% felt it was relevant. Adequate time was allocated for both oral (85% agreed) and poster (70%)

presentations. All featured speakers received highly positive to excellent feedback. There was unanimous agreement that the balance between basic and clinical research presentations was good.

Furthermore, 95% said they were very likely or likely to attend a future Hypertension Australia ASM, with a strong preference for maintaining an in-person format (85%). Some suggestions for improvement focused on including debate sessions and enhancing poster presentations.

Overall, ratings and feedback indicate a successful, impactful, and well-received scientific meeting.

Our invited speakers included:



RD Wright Lecture: Prof. Richard McManus, Oxford University, UK.
Professor of Primary Care Research
Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences

Richard McManus held four consecutive NHS/NIHR National Research Fellowships (DRF-Professorship, 2001-18) and was awarded an NIHR Senior Investigator Award in 2019. His main research interests are in the prevention of cardiovascular disease including following hypertensive pregnancy, in the context of multiple long-term conditions and when deprescribing may be appropriate.

He is Chief Investigator on an NIHR Programme Grant around Postnatal Self-Management of Blood Pressure following Pregnancy Hypertension and leads the self-management theme of the Oxford Thames Valley ARC. He is joint Chief Investigator of the OPTIMISE2 study assessing deprescribing antihypertensives in the over 75s. He is recognised internationally for his work on self-monitoring and self-management of hypertension and leads a consortium curating 25 datasets which form an individual patient data meta-analysis of self-monitoring of hypertension.

He chairs the Blood Pressure Monitoring Working Party of the British Hypertension Society and has provided expert advice to NICE (2011 & 2019 Hypertension Guideline) and the European Society of Cardiology/European Society of Hypertension (2018 & 2024 European Hypertension Guidelines). He leads Oxford's input into the School for Primary Care Research and chairs the NIHR Research Professors Selection Panel. He is chair of the PROMPPT programme steering committee and is a member of the NIHR Programme Grants for Applied Health Research Panel.



Austin Doyle Lecturer: A./Prof. Professor Nikola Bowden,
University of Newcastle.

Awarding-winning molecular biologist Associate Professor Nikola Bowden is giving existing cancer drugs new life by combining them in unconventional ways with exciting results. Over the years, the process of finding new cancer drug treatments has followed a strict pathway: the research reveals a biological discovery, which leads to a new drug discovery, drug development and testing through multiple stages of clinical trials.

The problem is this entire process can take 15-20 years to complete. Which means that a patient who is diagnosed with aggressive cancer today will be unlikely to benefit from the most recent biological discoveries and subsequent treatments.

“We need to rethink our conventional approach to cancer research,” asserts Associate Professor Nikola Bowden, whose research focuses on repurposing existing cancer drugs. “We are wasting years of research and knowledge by shelving old drugs and trying to always find new ones.”

Instead of focusing on creating new drugs, Nikola and her team are looking at how existing drugs can be used in new ways. For cancer patients who need more immediate solutions, her work is having a meaningful impact.

“Using current drugs in new ways is called drug repurposing. We know so much about safety, dosing and side effects of the drugs we already use, it is ideal to also see if they have anti-cancer activity. We need to start using the drugs we already have to their full potential.”



Colin I Johnston Lecturer: A/Prof. Jun Yang
Hudson Institute of Medical Research

Associate Professor Jun Yang (MBBS, PhD, FRACP) is a clinician-researcher who heads the Endocrine Hypertension Group at Hudson Institute of Medical Research. She is also a Research Fellow in the School of Clinical Sciences at Monash University and a Consultant Endocrinologist at Monash Health.

Since graduating with a MBBS (Hons, rank number 1) from Monash University, she has been actively involved in basic and clinical research as well as clinical practice. She undertook PhD studies with Dr Morag Young, Dr Colin Clyne and Professor Peter Fuller at Prince Henry’s Institute of Medical Research, now Hudson Institute, from 2008-2013. Her PhD thesis, entitled ‘Mineralocorticoid receptors (MR): mechanisms of ligand- and tissue-specific activation’, identified and characterised novel coregulators of the MR using a novel phage display technique in addition to cell culture work and gene expression assays. In addition to

laboratory-based research, A/Prof Yang established the [Endocrine Hypertension Service](#) at Monash Health and Hudson Institute with Professor Peter Fuller. She developed the Monash Health guidelines for the management of primary aldosteronism (PA) in 2010 and has since expanded the PA research program including collaborations with centres in America as a part of the American-Asian-Australian-Adrenal- Alliance (A5), Europe (Germany, Italy, Netherlands) and Asia (China, Taiwan). In December 2018, A/Prof Yang formed the [Primary Aldosteronism Centre of Excellence \(PACE\)](#) to consolidate the capabilities of a team of dedicated hypertension researchers within Australia to drive impactful change in the clinical management of PA.



Prof Clara Chow
University of Sydney

Professor Clara Chow is a cardiologist committed to reducing the burden of cardiovascular disease through prevention and innovative approaches to achieve this. She is Program Director Community Based Cardiac Services, Westmead Hospital and Professor of Medicine, Western Clinical School, Sydney Medical School, University of Sydney.

She has a PhD in Medicine from the University of Sydney and completed a postdoc in Cardiovascular epidemiology and clinical trials at McMaster University, Canada. Clara holds a Career Development Fellowship of the NHMRC co-funded by the National Heart Foundation. She has over 100 publications, focused on clinical and community approaches to cardiovascular prevention and including papers in leading international journals. She led the initial TEXT ME trial that showed text messaging programs were effective in lowering cholesterol, blood pressure and weight in patients with coronary heart disease.



Professor Stephen Nicholls, Director of Victorian Heart Hospital,
Monash Heart & ICU, Monash Health
Director of Victorian Heart Institute, Monash University
Professor of Cardiology, Monash University

Professor Steve Nicholls is the inaugural Director of the Victorian Heart Institute and a Professor of Cardiology at Monash University. He is the inaugural Director of the Victorian Heart Hospital which opened in February 2023.

Steve is a preventive cardiologist. His clinical interest is focused on identifying those at risk of heart disease earlier, and more effectively, and preventing catastrophic cardiovascular events from occurring. He is committed to solutions which improve equity across risk and management, focusing on women's heart health and other under-served populations.

His work spans the translational spectrum from the lab bench to the bedside, with a focus on understanding the factors that promote plaque formation, novel vascular imaging and leadership of large-scale clinical trials of new therapies designed to reduce the risk of heart disease. Professor Nicholls is the 2023 recipient of the Anitschkow Prize from the European Atherosclerosis Society.

He is Chair of the Asia Pacific Cardiometabolic Consortium, President of the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences.



Prof Richard O'Brien,
University of Melbourne

After undergraduate training at the Austin Hospital in Melbourne, Richard O'Brien undertook further studies in diabetic renal disease with Prof. George Jerums, completing a PhD entitled "Diabetic Nephropathy: Early Pathophysiology and Therapeutic Intervention". He continued his research at the Austin Hospital until 1991 when he moved to Monash Medical Centre. Prof. O'Brien spent 15 years as Head of Diabetes at Monash Medical Centre and moved back to the Austin Hospital in 2007 to take up his current position of Clinical Dean.

Over the last 10 years Prof O'Brien's research work has focused mainly on aspects of atherosclerosis in diabetes including lipid abnormalities and endothelial dysfunction and he has authored numerous scientific papers on these subjects.

Richard O'Brien is the current President of the Asian Pacific Society of Atherosclerosis and Vascular Diseases and is a past President of the Australian Atherosclerosis Society. He is also currently chair of the Australian Diabetes Society's Lipid Guidelines Committee, is the convener of the Victorian Lipid Group, and is the Victorian representative on the Australian Atherosclerosis Society Clinical Council.

In addition to his responsibilities in his role as Clinical Dean, Richard O'Brien is strongly committed to post graduate teaching, and has a long-standing interest in continuing education for general practitioners. He is frequently invited to speak at educational and scientific meetings in Australia and overseas. Prof. O'Brien also continues to be involved in direct patient care on a day-to-day basis and maintains ongoing research interests at the University of Melbourne and Austin Health.



Professor Alberto Avolio
Macquarie University, Sydney,

Professor Alberto Avolio is Professor Emeritus at Macquarie Medical School, Faculty of Medicine, Health and Human Sciences, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia. He has acquired international recognition in the field of cardiovascular haemodynamics. His research experience has been in pulsatile relationships between blood pressure and flow, mechanisms of arterial stiffness, pulse wave analysis, non-invasive estimation of central aortic pressure and cardiovascular modelling. He is on the editorial board of several international journals of cardiovascular research and hypertension and is a reviewer for over forty international scientific journals. He has been Past President of the Pulse of Asia Society. He is active in the emerging areas of cuffless measurement of blood pressure and is on committees for formation of international standards for validation of cuffless blood pressure devices. He has held positions of Visiting Professor at international academic institutions and is currently Visiting Professor at Northeastern University, Shenyang, China, and Jiaotong University, Shanghai, China. He has received professional Lifetime Achievement recognition from Pulse of Asia and Society for Artery Research.



Prof Alta Schutte,
University of New South Wales

Alta (Aletta E.) Schutte PhD, FESC, FRRSAf, ISHF is SHARP Professor and Principal Theme Lead of Cardiac, Vascular and Metabolic Medicine in the Faculty of Medicine and Health at UNSW Sydney, Australia, with a joint appointment as Professorial Fellow at the George Institute for Global Health. She has extensive experience in working in population-based studies with a focus on raised blood pressure, hypertension and cardiovascular disease.

She has vast experience in working in the field of hypertension and cardiovascular disease within Africa, but also as part of global projects. She has been the Chief Investigator of several multidisciplinary studies (POWIRS, SAfrEIC, African-PREDICT, co-PI of the South African leg of the PURE study), published ~400 papers in the field of blood pressure and cardiovascular disease, and supervised over 85 postgraduate students.

She is Co-lead of the National Hypertension Taskforce launched in December 2022 aimed at improving hypertension control rates in Australia from currently 32% to more than 70% by 2030.



Prof Jonathan Shaw
Baker Heart & Diabetes Institute

Professor Jonathan Shaw underwent his clinical and research training in the UK. He is Deputy Director (Clinical and Population Health) at Melbourne's Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute, where his research focuses on epidemiology and clinical research in diabetes, and he is also a consultant physician in the diabetes services.

He has authored over 500 peer-reviewed scientific papers and 35 book chapters. He is the Chair of the Diabetes Advisory Group to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Council member of the Australian Diabetes Society, and a Past-President of the International Diabetes Epidemiology Group. His awards include the global Novartis Diabetes Award (for research) (2006), the International Diabetes Epidemiology Group Peter Bennett award (2011), the Australian Diabetes Society's Jeff Flack Diabetes Data award (2015), and the Australian Diabetes Society's Kellion award (2108). In 2014, he was included in the Thomson Reuters *The World's Most Influential Scientific Minds*, which listed the 1% most highly cited scientists in the world since 2002. In 2017 and 2018, he was included in the Clarivate list of the world's most Highly Cited Researchers. In 2020, he was listed in the Stanford University listing of the world's top 2% of researchers.

Meeting Highlights

ECR Symposium

The meeting incorporated a very successful Early Career Researcher Symposium on Wednesday 29th of November, that was organised by the ECR committee. We thank Dr Hamdi Jama and Rikeish R Muralitharan for their organisation of the event.

The symposium included following presentations:

A/ Prof. Yugeesh Lankadeva spoke on *Tips for grants and fellowship success*.

Dr Anastasia Mihailidou spoke about *Mastering social media and science communication*.

Dr Sebastian Judd-Mole, of Millenium Science spoke on *Beyond academia in Australia*.

Dr Bhavisa Bakrania spoke on *Is an international post-doc right for me*.

Women in Hypertension Session

Carrying on from last year's highly successful Women in Hypertension (WiH) Spotlight Session, the 2023 Annual Scientific Meeting featured another session to highlight the women in hypertension, developed and chaired by Dr Audrey Adji with guest speakers as follows:

Prof. Louise Purton - St. Vincent's Institute of Medical Research

Dr Saraid Billiards - Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes

These presentations were followed by a panel including Dr Audrey Adji - Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute and Dr Jeslyn Lim (Research Grants and Development Manager of Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute) which generated some fantastic discussion.

BPOzKids: Blood Pressure in Australian Children

Unlike the prior two years, a general paediatric symposium was not held in 2023. Instead, there was a day-long workshop of the Australian Paediatric Hypertension Guideline Steering Committee and Clinical Advisory Panel on November 28, hosted by the Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI).

This guideline Initiative was formed with the support of Hypertension Australia and with the aim to adapt international guidelines to the Australian context, noting that current Australian hypertension guidelines do not address childhood and adolescence. This was our first in-person gathering and brought together a diverse range of experts from around Australia.

The morning focused on blood pressure screening in childhood, which is one of the more difficult/controversial issues. In the afternoon session, we started to develop an implementation plan noting that guidelines should be developed with implementation being considered throughout the process.

The initiative will continue in 2024 under the leadership of A/Prof Jonathan Mynard (MCRI), Dr Nicholas Larkins (Perth Children's Hospital) and A/Prof Cathy Quinlan (Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne).

Speakers

Our 2023 HBPRCA keynote and invited named lecturers delivered a plethora of important and engaging presentations that were well received by this year's attendees. All of our invited speakers were captivating and we were very fortunate to hear from the following HBPRCA keynote invited named lecturers:

The 2023 RD Wright Lecture was given by **Professor Richard McManus from Oxford, UK**. Professor McManus' presentation, *Self-management of hypertension, what works and what doesn't*, was extremely well received by all.

The 2023 Austin E Doyle Lecture was given by **A/Professor Nikola Bowden**, University of Newcastle: *Drug repurposing – fast and cost-effective discovery of new treatments with unexpected challenges*. Her presentation was fascinating and enjoyed by all.

The 2023 Colin I Johnston Lecture was given by **A/Professor Jun Yang**, Hudson Institute of Medical Research: *Primary aldosteronism: Lessons from cells, clinics, cohorts and consumers* was very well received.

The 2021 Paul Korner Medal Awardee **Professor Lawrie Beilin** was invited to speak as a recognised senior scientist who is an active researcher and has made a significant contribution to high blood pressure and the HBPRCA. He shared his wisdom on: *The rise and fall of hypertension: twists in the tale*.

HA was pleased to receive a splendid lecture from the 2022 American Hypertension Association (AHA) award winner **Associate Professor, Camilla Ferreira Wenceslau**, University of South Carolina (virtual). We would like to thank her for her participation.

We are delighted the 2022 British and Irish Hypertension Society (BIHS) winner, **Kaya Jane Olczak**, Queen Mary University of London, was able to attend. Her presentation was well appreciated.

HBPRCA Awards 2023

A host of talent within HBPRCA membership was again recognised and rewarded in 2023 including the presentation of a range of oral and poster awards. A hearty congratulations goes out to all the worthy recipients below.

The Robert Vandongen award:

The Robert Vandongen award is presented for the highest scoring abstract submitted by a member from Western Australia.

The 2023 Robert Vandongen award went to **Justine Chan**

The Judith Whitworth award:

Prof Judith Whitworth was the first woman to be elected as the president of the HBPRCA (1999-2001). Throughout her career, Prof Whitworth not only contributed to a major way to high blood pressure research herself, and to the mechanisms involved in steroid-related hypertension, but broke numerous barriers and paved a path for women in research, clinical practice and policy making. The Judith Whitworth award goes to the highest ranked HBPRCA member abstract for which the first author is a woman.

The 2023 Judith Whitworth award winner was **Leticia Camargo Tavares, from Monash University**

The Jaye Chin-Dusting Mid-Career Scientist award:

Prof Jaye Chin-Dusting was the second woman to be elected as the president of the HBPRCA (2011-2016). As a founder of the Australian Cardiovascular Alliance, Prof Chin-Dusting was deeply concerned with the funding available for cardiovascular disease, which affects particularly those in the early- and mid-stages of their career. During her presidency of the HBPRCA, she also established the young investigator subcommittee of the HBPRCA, to improve training, networking, and opportunities for early and mid-career high blood pressure researchers.

A mid-career scientist (between 5-20 years post PhD) who is an active researcher will receive the Jaye Chin-Dusting Award. The 2023 Winner of the Jaye Chin-Dusting Mid-Career Scientist in High Blood Pressure Research award went to **Dr Helena Qin** of Monash University.

The Paul Korner Senior Scientist in High Blood Pressure Research award:

Prof Paul Korner was one of the founders and a former president of the HBPRCA (1987-1989). He devoted a large part of his career to researching the causes of essential hypertension, with a special focus on underlying neural and cardiovascular mechanisms. A senior scientist (>20 years post-PhD) who is an active researcher and has made a significant contribution to high blood pressure and the HBPRCA receives the Paul Korner Senior Scientist in High Blood Pressure Research Medal.

This year's worthy recipient is Emeritus **Prof. Brian Morris**, University of Sydney.

Student and Early Career Researcher Awards:

2023 saw a great range of high-quality Student and Early Career Research oral and poster submissions. The effort in their work have been appreciated by all, and congratulations extend to the following winners:

The HBPRCA 2023 Student Poster award went to: **Jonathan Glenning, Murdoch Children's research institute.**

The HBPRCA 2023 Student Oral award went to: **Taku Furukawa of the Florey Institute**, who also won the opportunity attend to present at the 2023 BIHS meeting.

The HBPRCA 2023 Early Career Researcher Poster award went to: **Maria Jelinic** of La Trobe University

The HBPRCA 2023 Early Career Researcher Oral award went to: **Connie Ow** of Florey Institute of Medical Research who also won the opportunity to attend and present at the 2023 AHA meeting.



From left: Richard McManus ,Jonathan Glenning, Taku Furukawa, Brian Morris, Markus Schlaich Maria Jelinic, Connie Ow, Leticia Camargo Tavares

Sponsors

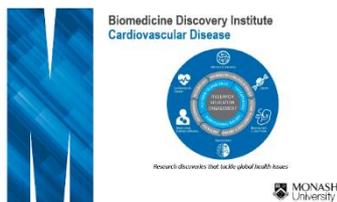
Hypertension Australia would like to extend a huge thank you to our sponsors who have continued supporting us through this year and without whom none of this would be possible. Sponsors for the 2023 Annual Scientific Meeting are as follows:

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We thank you all for attending and participating in our 2023 Annual Scientific Meeting.

The High Blood Pressure Research Council of Australia

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