

Prince of Wales  
Hospital  
Foundation

POWHF

# Saving Lives

EDITION #29 2023

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## Message from the CEO

As we head into the holiday season, there are some important things to be reminded of. With the threat of bushfires, increased cost of living and global community crises, we should all reflect on what is most important. Our health. One of the key benefits of supporting the Prince of Wales Hospital is to experience the engagement with the community and commitment to delivering best healthcare outcomes for all. There is no bias or competition for care – it is offered to everyone in need. This festive season, more people will present to the Emergency Department with illness or injury and in need of urgent care. The wonderful staff here are the ready to diagnose, treat and care for patients often in health crises, and we honour them. It is our mission to continue supporting best healthcare for all at Prince of Wales Hospital.



We are incredibly thankful for the generous support of our community of supporters and donors, without whom, we could not deliver the programs and initiatives that impact patient care. I want to wish you all a safe, happy and healthy holiday season.

Together we can create a healthier tomorrow,  
Robert

## Meet IgG deficiency patients Tracy and Sandra

We had the pleasure of interviewing Tracy and Sandra who are IgG deficiency patients at Prince of Wales Hospital.

In a healthy body, Immunoglobulin (IgG) is the most abundant antibody in the blood. People living with IgG deficiency are therefore prone to infections. Depending on the severity and frequency of the infections patients may require regular transfusions. Two of these patients are Tracey and Sandra. Both need to visit POWH regularly to ensure adequate levels of IgG. With funding from us, both Sandra and Tracey have now been trained to use subcutaneous immunoglobulin (SCIg) pumps to safely inject themselves at home.

'I am so grateful to the Foundation. The pumps allow me to arrange my infusions around life rather than life around my infusions' says Sandra.

Tracey is just as thrilled stating that 'it will make such a difference to my life. When I used to get home after the monthly IV infusion, I was completely wiped out for 24 hours. The past month has been fantastic, and I have managed well, no more wipe outs. Thanks again to the foundation.' The only downside to no longer having to come to POWH so regularly is not seeing the wonderful staff who has become like family.



## The Art of Wellbeing

Our recent art show in the new Acute Services Building united established artists, Foundation supporters and the hospital community.

We came together to acknowledge and celebrate the profound impact of art on wellbeing.

Studies have shown that creative expression helps maintain our immune systems. In addition to that, art is clinically proven to reduce stress, elevate mood, and lower blood pressure acknowledging the fundamental link between art and health. The Art Exhibition was an exemplar of established Australian artists showcasing promising and emerging hospital staff, patients as well as other local and Indigenous artists. A percentage of all art sales from that evening are directed to fund art therapy in mental health.



## Helping a family in need



When their teenage daughter was diagnosed with an arteriovenous malformation (AVM) in the brain, Rozina and Azmal were devastated.

AVM is a tangle of blood vessels that irregularly connects arteries and veins causing disruption to blood and oxygen flow. AVMs can cause uncontrolled bleeding and hemorrhage, so surgery is lifesaving. Sadly, for Rozina and Azmal, treatment for their daughter was not available in their native Fiji. Being notified of the dire situation through a relative of the family, Prince of Wales Hospital offered to treat their daughter with urgency. Patient and parents are extremely grateful for the amazing support, the treatment and care they received.

## Printing 3D blood vessels to research cell function for dialysis patients

In Australia, about 10% of adults have chronic kidney disease, and around 15,000 people need dialysis.

Dialysis is a crucial treatment that uses a machine to clean the blood by getting rid of waste and extra fluids. To do this, it's important to have a good connection to the bloodstream, which is typically created surgically by joining an artery and a vein, called a dialysis fistula. Sadly, half of these dialysis fistulas don't work well enough to support patients properly. We don't fully understand why this happens, which makes it hard to predict which fistulas will fail. With funding from our Annual Grants, Dr. Nasir Shah has come up with a clever solution. He created a 3D model that mimics patient dialysis fistulas. This model can simulate how the cells lining blood vessels behave and respond to real flow of blood. This research is extremely important as we currently don't have much information on why dialysis fistulas fail. We're excited to see what Dr. Shah's research reveals since there's a lack of information in the scientific world about this topic. Additionally, the knowledge gained from this study could help in other areas of research related to how blood flows in the human body.



## Congratulations to our Raffle winner!

Congratulations to our Raffle winner Stella who won the main prize of a \$5,000 Luxury Escapes holiday. Stella is planning to travel to Greece next year with her husband and her two children to experience the locations of her parents and grandparents. Stay tuned for our next Raffle and next Raffle winner!





## Clinician in the spotlight

We recently met with Dr. Shivam Agrawal, a Clinical and Laboratory Haematologist at POWH to learn more about him, his work and what he enjoys most about POWH.

### What's your current role at POWH?

I work as a Clinical and Laboratory Haematologist and I treat patients with blood conditions on the wards and in the clinic. I also have a role in laboratory diagnostics and quality assurance. In addition to that I am also the medical Clinical Superintendent which primarily involves supervising medical specialists in training at POWH.

**'I really value that the staff here, as well as the staff on the neighbouring campuses, all have the same goal: looking after patients.'**

### How did you progress in your current role?

I started this role in January 2023, but I've been at POWH on and off for the last 16 years. I've trained at UNSW and was at POWH for most of my student placements. I did most of my training both in internal medicine and haematology at POWH over the last eight years. I have been in Melbourne for the last couple of years undertaking a fellowship at the Olivia Newton-John Cancer Research Institute. I just returned at the beginning of this year, but I've been in



and around the POWH campus for a long time.

### What do you enjoy most about working at POWH?

The one thing that stands out at POWH is the collegiality. I really value that the staff here, as well as the staff on the neighbouring campuses all have the same goal: looking after patients and making sure the patient experience is as smooth as possible.

### What was your initial interest in pursuing haematology?

I enjoy the puzzle of medicine and solving problems. In hematology especially, we have lots of lab tests to help diagnose patients with complicated problems they may be experiencing so it is exciting to solve the problem. That is the core of what drew me to medicine in the first place. In addition to that, I enjoy building long term therapeutic relationships with patients as many of our patients stay with us for a very long time. Following them through their journey and seeing them improve is wonderful and rewarding.

### What does a typical day at work look like?

I play a different role every day and I enjoy the variety in my work. A typical day could vary from being in the clinic and then going

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to the ward to see patients. Luckily, our department is now located in the state-of-the-art Acute Services Building, which is excellent for all involved. That is pretty much what a clinical day looks like. A laboratory day means that I look at blood films and reports to sign off. If it's an education-based day, it'd be holding an educational session for the trainees or attending a committee meeting.

### What challenges do you face in your role?

One of the main challenges is getting to know everyone because I work with so many different people and I have been away for a couple of years. Especially with my education role, there are a lot of new people and I really value building relationships with everyone so just getting to know everyone's names and learning that little thing about everyone is challenging.



### Do you have a favourite patient memory?

There are so many patient experiences that I'm fond of, but one that comes to mind is treating a very unwell patient in the intensive care unit. When we went to the laboratory to look at their blood smear under the microscope to help us put all the pieces together, we quickly made the diagnosis of a very serious but very treatable condition which was a huge relief. Following that discovery, we treated the patient in intensive care

for a few days and I remember seeing the recovered patient a few weeks later in the clinic. They were very happy and had returned to work as well as gone back to their normal life. I smile thinking of that recurring patient memory. It is the best feeling to see a patient come through and get back to their normal life, doing the things they enjoy.

### Lastly, what do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

I'm an avid runner. Running helps me to clear my mind

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and it also keeps me fit. I'm currently training for a half marathon next year. I also play a lot of squash and I am a big sports fan, so I like to watch the AFL in the winter and the cricket in summer.

## Detecting the early signs of UV-related eye conditions and skin cancer

The ophthalmology department at POWH has developed a portable smartphone-based tool that enables patients to scan their eyes for early signs of UV damage.

Despite the magnitude of problems caused by UV exposure – especially in Australia, there are currently no reliable solutions to

document personal UV exposure. To validate this novel innovation against the gold standard benchtop device, we funded a study to evaluate the safety, efficiency, and functionality of this optical add-on to a smartphone hoping to bring this invention one step closer to universal accessibility.

Watch this space for more updates as the study progresses.



**Donate today for a healthier tomorrow.**

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