



# SURG - AHEAD

Newsletter of  
Monash University Department of Surgery  
Central Clinical School, Alfred Hospital

Volume 5 Issue 3.

July 2009

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D. S. Rosengarten  
Surgical Trainee Research Prize 2009

## Featuring

**Professor Russell L. Gruen**  
**MBBS, PhD, FRACS**

Russell Gruen is Professor of Surgery and Public Health at Monash University, Director of the National Trauma Research Institute, and is a

surgeon and head of Trauma Quality Assurance at The Alfred Hospital.



Russell graduated in medicine from the University of Melbourne, trained in general surgery at St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne, and then in trauma surgery and surgical critical care at Harborview Medical Centre in Seattle, USA. From 2006 to 2009 he was Associate Professor of Surgery at the University of Melbourne and Royal Melbourne Hospital.

Russell aims to support the integration of high quality research, clinical practice and policy decision-making, and has had a variety of research and policy experiences. He received a PhD for his study of the delivery of surgical services to remote and disadvantaged Aboriginal communities in northern Australia. In 2002-2003 he was a Harkness Fellow in Health Care Policy and a Fellow in Medical Ethics at Harvard University in Boston, USA, studying medical professionalism and the public roles of doctors.

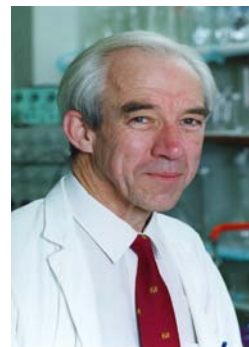
The focus of Russell's recent research has been clinical quality improvement, optimising systems of surgical and trauma care, and improving the use of evidence in clinical and health policy decision-making. He is an editor of the Effective Practice and Organisation of Care Group in the Cochrane Collaboration, an international organization dedicated to making up-to-date accurate information about the effects of healthcare readily available. He also established the Global Evidence Mapping (GEM) Initiative to bring together a network of people and organisations to develop innovative methods of characterising, contextualising and increasing the accessibility of research in broad clinical areas, and he leads a program of translational research in traumatic brain injury.

Russell has received research funding totalling more than \$5 million, holds an NH&MRC Career Development Award, and has authored over 55 publications in peer-reviewed journals, including the Lancet, JAMA and the New England Journal of Medicine. He has also been awarded a RACS G. J. Royal Medal, a General Surgeons Australia Medal, and a Traveling Fellowship of the James IV Association of Surgeons.

Russell and his wife, Theresa, have two sons, Spencer and Kody, with whom he enjoys playing music and pursuing outdoor activities, especially football and biking.



## Editorial



In this issue we feature the launch and initial meeting of the Monash University Surgical Interest Group (MUSIG). This began with a extremely well attended meeting at the Monash University Clayton Campus and was followed by a very successful hands-on surgical workshop at the Alfred Hospital organised by the Monash University, Department of Surgery.

We all look forward to Russell Gruen joining the Department of Surgery at the Alfred Hospital. Russell will be heading up the National Trauma Research Institute (NTRI) and the Trauma Department at the Alfred Hospital.

The MUDS executive continues to meet at 7am every second Tuesday. At a recent meeting strong support was expressed for the Alfred Private Hospital scheduled to be constructed as part of the West Wing development. All Surgical Departmental heads will be approaching Andrew Way, the new Alfred CEO to push forward this concept.

Having a co-located private hospital on the Alfred Campus is long overdue and its establishment would transform the working arrangements for many sessional staff at the Alfred. Being geographically full-time would be very beneficial to the public hospital in terms of clinical availability, teaching and research.

Part of the duties and privilege of a surgeon or any doctor working at a teaching hospital is to pass on his knowledge and wisdom to medical students. So at the MUSIG Hands on Workshop it was great to be surrounded by so many students very keen to learn.

Learning how to suture the skin and how to tie hand knots is something most of us learn as medical

students. I still remember the first time I learnt to tie surgical knots by hand. I was a fifth year medical student on an obstetrics rotation at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Adelaide. A flamboyant obstetrician called Frank Welch showed us how to tie knots. Living-in during our obstetrics term gave us plenty of time to practice knots and the skill, once learned was never forgotten. I think all of us that took part in the MUSIG workshop experienced a boost to our enthusiasm for teaching.

**Franklin Rosenfeldt**



**Associate Professor Michael Leung, Head of Plastic Surgery demonstrating suturing techniques.**

**Did you know ?**

Our eyes are always the same size from birth.

Every person has a unique tongue print.

Your mouth produces 1 litre of saliva a day.

On average, you breathe 23,000 times a day.

**THE DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY**



**Message from The Departmental Head Professor Jeffrey V Rosenfeldt**

As you know the Monash University medical students have formed a surgical interest group as part of the Monash University Medical Students Association. This group has already had a successful meeting at the Monash Medical Centre. ( see MUSIG Report).

The second meeting was held on Saturday morning – 16<sup>th</sup> May 2009 in the Centre for Health Innovations (CHI) in the Burnet Tower, Alfred Campus. This was organised by Professor Frank Rosenfeldt. We had over a 100 medical students at Monash University who registered for the event but we could only accommodate 50 students maximum. We may have to hold a similar event for the students who could not be accommodated. All years were represented including some students from Gippsland. This event was held on a

One of the CHI staff, Ms Tess Vawser conducted the surgical scrubbing and gowning session which included ultraviolet light testing to determine whether the students had adequately scrubbed their hands and forearms.

We showed them how to do instrument ties, hand ties and different suturing techniques. Associate Professor Michael Leung gave the students an illustrated talk on wound closure prior to the suturing session.



**Demonstration in the animal research operating theater.**

Some of the Monash anatomy demonstrators were also demonstrating heart anatomy.

The most popular session appeared to be the laparoscopic simulator where the students tested their eye-hand coordination using laparoscopic instruments. This was conducted by Associate Professor Wendy Brown and Dr Paul Burton, her PhD student.

Professor Frank Rosenfeldt gave the students a talk on research. We also had a number of other senior clinicians and registrars helping out.

I said to the students at the end of the morning that we were not trying to turn them all into surgeons but that they should certainly all learn how to gown and glove and suture wounds. These are essential and generic skills for all doctors. We were pleased that they were able to build up their skills and experience in these areas.



**Tess Vawser and a group of MUSIG students scrubbing, gowning and gloving**



**Professor Jeffrey Rosenfeldt demonstrating knot tying.**

### **Report on Hands-on Surgical Workshop for Students.**

At 7.45 am students were arriving with excitement and expectation for a morning of surgical instruction. All together 50 students from first year to final year came from the Alfred, Monash Medical Centre and Gippsland campuses attended.

The teachers were senior surgeons and surgical trainees from the major departments of the Alfred including Professor Jeff Rosenfeldt; Head of Department of Surgery, Professor Frank Rosenfeldt, Research Professor; Associate Professor Michael Leung, Head of Department Plastic Surgery; Associate Professor Wendy Brown & Mr Paul Burton, Department of General Surgery; Miss Susan Liew, Head of Orthopaedic Surgery; Doctor Peter Hwang, Clinical Director of Neurosurgery; the following trainee staff, Dr Krish Chaudhuri, Dr Justin Chan – Cardio-thoracic registrars; Dr Surain Ranjarai, Department of Anatomy, Monash University; Dr Deepal, Neurosurgery; Dr Bob Salamonsen; Mr John Hatcher – Volunteer tour guide; Tess Vawser, Simulation Development Manager, Centre for Health Innovation, Alfred.

The program included three stations in the Simulation Centre and three in the Department of Surgery. In the Simulation Centre were the following: Suturing (4 tables), Laparoscopic Simulation and knot tying (2 tables), Cardiac Anatomy (1 table).

In the Simulation Centre theatre students were instructed in scrubbing up, gowning and gloving and were given ultra violet testing to see the quality of their techniques. At the Department of Surgery site

students first saw the Alfred Archives and the Museum of Cardiac Surgery with heart Lung machines in action. They visited the surgical experimental operating theatres, with a demonstration with the Ventrassist artificial heart and then visited the surgical suturing laboratory in the department. They finished off with a lecture on research, its benefits and role in a medical career.



**Professor Bob Salamonsen and Ventrassist patient Ian Haig.**

Also present at the lecture was Mr Ian Haig a cardiac patient with an implanted Ventrassist left ventricular (artificial heart) device who described living with his life saving heart pump and allowed students to feel his absent pulse!



**Wendy Brown demonstrating laparoscopic surgery techniques.**

Altogether the morning was a great success and marked by high degree of enthusiasm by students and instructors.

The simulation centre was a fine venue for the event and Tess Vawser was an excellent teacher. Following this success it is proposed to offer further workshops and perhaps lectures where surgeons explain their own career choices and discuss opportunities on the various surgical specialities.



**Justin Chan and Kris Chandhuri (L to R) demonstrating cardiac anatomy.**

## **THE CUTTING EDGE OF STUDENT SURGICAL PROMOTION**

*Monash University Surgical Interest Group (MUSIG)*

Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2009 heralded the launch of the Monash University Surgical Interest Group (MUSIG). The stage was graced by high calibre speakers from RACS & hospitals all over Melbourne. The night was targeted at, as the name of our group implies, medical students with an interest in surgery as a future career. Presentations included an insight into a career as a surgeon, both from a consultant and a trainee registrar, information about research and surgery, an outline of the Surgical Education Training (SET) program and a surgeon's tale from medical student to academic surgeon. From the perspective of the MUSIG committee, the launch was an enormous success - the turnout far exceeded our expectations, food trays were left spotless within minutes and the feedback extremely positive, both from the students and surgeons who attended.

What better way to start off what looks to be a very promising year in student surgical promotion.



**Jitendra Jain & Pamela Boekel, co-founders of MUSIG address the large audience.**

MUSIG was formed through the ambitious desires of Pamela Boekel & Jitendra Jain in 2008. After much planning and hard work the surgical interest group was convened in early 2009 and a committee elected.

The group aims to promote surgery as a career and facilitate the transition from medical student to prospective surgeon through information session, careers nights, development of surgical skills and building relationships with surgeons.

The response from the launch has given us an idea of what direction to take MUSIG in the near future. We have numerous workshops planned with associated hospitals and the Royal College of Surgeons.

Our surgical skills workshop featured suturing & laparoscopy simulation at the Alfred Hospital. We are also planning a surgical careers symposium about the different surgical specialities, the first of which is planned for the 6<sup>th</sup> of August at the Monash Medical Centre at 7pm. These will be presented as a case study night where surgeons talk about potential roles they play in a fictional case to depict a day in the life of their profession. This will be followed by a more personalised session where students can meet and greet the surgeons while the surgeons run a clinical skill demonstration. We also wish to spearhead a mentor program, where students and surgeons can form a long term relationship and foster a career in surgery. Although this is still in its early stages, we have high hopes for it in the future.

Monash University & RACS have expressed a vested interest in the future of MUSIG and we welcome any and all involvement, especially

surgeons who are willing to give some of their time to promote a career in surgery and pass on some words of wisdom to the potential surgeons of tomorrow. We have numerous events during the year where any participation would be appreciated. If you wish to be involved we can place you on our mailing list, or you can email in with ideas of your own by contacting us at [musig@mumus.org](mailto:musig@mumus.org).

Sadid Khan

MUSIG Publications

## Farewell



**Farewell dinner ( L to R )Supervisor Professor Frank Rosenfeldt, Margaretha Gunawan, Tika Prameswari Hudono, Leslie Braun, Ruchong Ou, and Catherine Reardon.**

The two Indonesian BMed Sc Honours Students of 2008 were farewelled at the Charsfield Hotel. We are pleased to announce that both Margaretha and Tika achieved first class honours for their project. The supervisors were Professor Frank Rosenfeld, Lesley Braun and Max Esser.



## Awards and Prizes Trauma Paper Competitions



Presenters at the Chicago meeting with Alex pictured third from right.

**Winner of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Trauma Committee Registrars' Papers Day Competition held at the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons in Melbourne on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2008, and the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Residents Trauma Papers Competition held during the 87<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Committee on Trauma in Chicago, U.S.A. on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2009**

### Australian meeting

A Good set of marking criteria were sent to candidates before the meeting. There was very useful feedback from committee members with practical advice on improving my presentation

### American meeting

The meeting was at the Chicago Intercontinental Hotel, located on the Magnificent Mile on Michigan Avenue and was originally built in 1929 as the Medinah Athletic Club. The competition was held on Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> March from 1:00-6:00 PM, followed by a wine and cheese reception.

There was a scientific program with all the abstracts and a record of previous winners. We all presented to about 100 faculty members (trauma surgeons from across the USA and Canada).

There was a basic science category and a clinical research category (I was in the clinical group).

There were 15 papers presented, 11 from the USA, 2 from Canada, one from Brazil, and one from Australia. I presented the paper "Patterns of brain tissue metabolites predict episodes of

intracranial hypertension in patients with severe traumatic brain injury".

I gave a 10 minute presentation with 10 minutes for questions and comments, most of which were very insightful.

It was a 2.5 day meeting. We were allowed access to business meetings. They were of limited clinical education value and were more focused on system change and implementation. I instead spent time at the Olympic swimming pool on the 12<sup>th</sup> floor of the hotel, memorable for its terra-cotta fountain of Neptune lined with brilliant blue Spanish Majolica tiles!

The winners for each category were announced on Friday evening, during the trauma banquet, which included a fantastic performance by a group of local opera singers.

As the 1<sup>st</sup> place winner for clinical research, I was invited to submit my paper for a fast-tracked publication by the Journal of the American College of Surgeons.

All flights, transfers, accommodation, and living expenses were generously covered by the American College of Surgeons. Bridget Blackwood, from the ACS Trauma Programs Office did an excellent job at organising all this. Chicago is a fantastic city; the steaks at Chicago Chop house and the deep pan pizza at Uno Chicago Grill are highly recommended as is Kingston Mines for great live Blues! My hosts were very welcoming and kind and made my visit all the more memorable.

Once again, I would like to thank both colleges for the opportunity to present at these meetings

### Alexios Adamides

## 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the opening of the Department of Surgery at Prince Henry's Hospital



Professors Julian Smith, David Scott, Vernon Marshall & James Watts ( L to R )

## NOTICE

### THE ALFRED HOSPITAL D. S. ROSENGARTEN SURGICAL TRAINEE RESEARCH PRIZE 2009

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of June 2009 a Dinner was held in celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the opening of the Department of Surgery at Prince Henry's Hospital which was subsequently relocated to Monash Medical Centre.

The Department was opened on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 1969 by Mr Stan Reid, President of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons at that time. Interestingly, Mr Reid was a member of the senior surgical staff of Prince Henry's Hospital.



**Professor Jeffrey Rosenfeld and Mr Rowan Story  
(L to R)**

The inaugural Professor and Chairman was James Watts and he occupied the position for 6 years. Professor Vernon Marshall was in charge until 1996 when he retired from the University. Professor David Scott was the Acting Head of the Department until 2001 when Professor Julian Smith took up his current position.

Professor Scott acted as the Master of Ceremonies for the celebratory dinner and Professors Watts, Marshall and Smith provided their perspective on the early days, the evolution and the current status of the Department.

Gratitude was expressed to all those in attendance who had contributed to the teaching and research activities of the Department in various forms and for various durations over its 40 year history. The evening was an outstanding opportunity to reminisce and to renew old friendships. Plans are afoot to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with equal enthusiasm.

The prize consisting of a shield and \$1000 will be awarded for the best surgical research project performed by an Alfred Hospital surgical trainee.

Advanced and Basic Surgical trainees in all disciplines at The Alfred Hospital are eligible to apply and are encouraged to participate.

The winner, to be decided by a panel of adjudicators, will be announced at the conclusion of a scientific symposium at which the projects will be presented. This will be held on Saturday 5th December, 2009 at 8.00 am in the 3rd Floor, Conference Room, Department of Surgery, Monash University Medical School, The Alfred.

The format will be ten minutes verbal presentation with five minutes discussion.

The panel of adjudicators will award points for the following: originality of idea; planning and design; methodology; analysis; conclusion; presentation; discussion and the abstract.

**The closing date for applications will be FRIDAY  
27th NOVEMBER 2009.**

The application should include a summary abstract (no greater than 200 words on A4 paper) of the project including introduction, aims, methods, results and conclusions, and should be forwarded to:

Mr. Stewart Skinner  
C/o Ms Catherine Wong  
Monash University  
Department of Surgery  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor MMS, Alfred Hospital  
Or via email to:

**[Catherine.wong@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:Catherine.wong@med.monash.edu.au)**  
**Ph: 990 30611 Fax: 9510 3365**

Further details and advice may be obtained through  
Mr. Stewart Skinner at  
[Stewart.Skinner@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:Stewart.Skinner@med.monash.edu.au)