



community



CURRENT HIGHLIGHTS

- POSSUM 2022 Invitation
- Meet your Healthcare Team
- Meet the Research Team
- Research Studies
- Past/Upcoming Events

Dear POSSUMs,

Can you feel the change, spring 2022 is here! While COVID 19 is still lurking around, we are starting to see our normality return to pre-COVID times. We are gaining momentum in improving our delivery of care with our cancer nurse coordinator and our research team.

We look forward to seeing you at the annual POSSUM morning tea where we will share our highlights and our future plans.

POSSUM 2022

It has been 3 years since we held our annual POSSUM morning tea in person. We are thrilled to invite you to join your medical care team and fellow POSSUMS on the **7th of November, Monday** for a cup of tea or coffee and treats. We will also have speakers presenting on various topics that you may find useful.

When: 7th November, Monday 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Where: 11th Floor, Building A,
St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne,
41 Victoria Parade Fitzroy 3056

OR

join us online

To book your tickets, please [click here](#) to register

OR visit

<https://possum2022.eventbrite.com.au>

OR ring

Eunice/Lynn on 03 9906 5626 to let us know!

Hurry! Only 50 in-person seats available.



CANCER NURSE SPECIALIST

Our unit is fortunate to have Paula Swannock as our Cancer Nurse Coordinator. Paula is a specialist nurse who guides patients through their diagnosis, treatment and aftercare. Paula has a wealth of experience, prior to current position, her role was as a Nurse Endoscopist within the speciality of Endoscopy, Gastroenterology and Colorectal Surgery. She is available as a central contact person at St Vincent's and will be able to answer questions or expedite enquiries to relevant medical specialists within the hospital.



Paula Swannock

Email: paula.swannock@svha.org.au

Work Phone: 0428 118 658

UNIT WEBSITE – WWW.HPBUGISURGERY.ORG

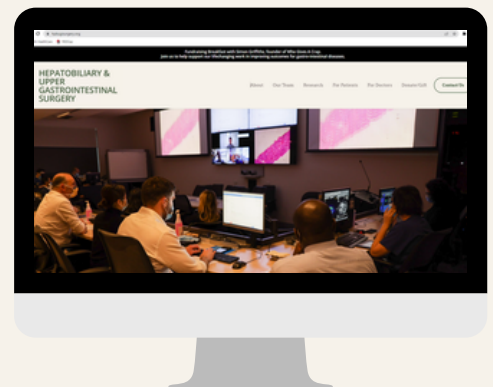
Everything you need to know about getting ready for surgery and taking care of yourself after.

In the past year, we have been working extensively to launch our unit website. With patient-education as our primary focus, the website serves as a comprehensive information portal for patients who might be undergoing hepato-pancreatico-biliary or upper gastrointestinal treatments with our surgical team here at St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne.

We understand that the prospect of undergoing surgery can be overwhelming for many patients. And often times, information provided verbally during appointments is quite complex and difficult to remember. With this in mind, we have included information on our website detailing every step of your journey. From "how to get ready for surgery" to "what to expect after surgery", patients are now able to access the information wherever and whenever.

To all our new POSSUMs who have had the opportunity to utilise our website this year, we hope it served you well. Please give us feedback on the website design, from making it easier to navigate or information that you felt you could not find.

This website is best experienced on a desktop or tablet, but we endeavor to make it a more mobile friendly experience in time to come.



Come visit us:  <https://www.hpbugisurgery.org/>

MEET OUR EXCHANGE FELLOW

Dr Keith Dindi, a Cardiothoracic surgeon from Kenya, has been undertaking a fellowship to enhance skills in Upper GI and Cardiothoracic surgery. Dr Keith Dindi completed training last year at Tenwek Hospital, Kenya, a facility that is a referral centre for patients from different parts of Africa. Tenwek Hospital offers compassionate care to patients who could otherwise not afford high level surgical care.



The aim of the exchange fellowship program is to provide surgeons further skills and training, increasing access for medical professionals to experience practice in challenging and new scenarios, enhancing skills and ultimately contributing to a better global standard of surgery. These trainees are then able to back the skills acquired to help provide specialised care to patients.

Dr Keith Dindi has high hopes for the fellowship program:

"I am the first in what is hoped to be a recurring fellowship program that will have a great impact on the continent of Africa".

Dr Dindi is also in the process of enrolling in a higher degree whilst undertaking his sub-specialty training. This higher degree will focus on the development, implementation and evaluation of sub-specialty surgical programs in resource limited environments, a worthwhile contribution to his home of rural Kenya.

MEET OUR FELLOWS

Hepatobiliary Fellow - Dr Olukunle Onasnya

When Dr Onasnya is not busy making sure your liver and pancreas are in tip top shape, he enjoys long walks, golfing and playing football.



Upper Gastrointestinal Fellow - Dr Cheng Qiuye

When Dr Cheng is not busy taking care of your stomachs and oesophagus, he enjoys scuba diving, drawing and photography.

MEET OUR RESEARCH TEAM

Our research unit has been keeping busy and growing over the past year with the addition of two new research members.

Research Assistant - Stefanie Navaratnam

Stef has just started work with the unit in August 2022. Prior to COVID, she was playing tennis in Tennessee, where she failed to visit Dollywood. After working 9 - 5, she aims to return to the US to visit this wonder of the world.



Research Coordinator - Eunice Lim

Eunice has just finished her first year working with us. She can rival you in an all-you-can-eat buffet and is an expert in aerial silk acrobatics...30 minutes after resting from last meal though.

PhD Candidate - Dr Henry Badgery

Henry (on the left) is our first PhD student of the unit and he is currently in his second year. He loves eating noodles and smoking meats. Currently, he is travelling around the US with his supervisor Dr Matt Read (on the right) to visit our collaborators at Stanford, MIT and Virginia Mason.



PhD Candidate - Dr Rosalind Quincey O'Neill

Roz is our second PhD student who commenced her studies with us in March 2022. She is known for colour-coordinating her socks to her outfits. Contrary to the picture on the left, she is not an avid fisherwoman. Note - her nails match the fish.

Bukowski - Research Mascot

Loves Henry's noodles and does an excellent job of keeping us hard at work as no one is allowed to leave the office.



RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS



HIIT Cancer Study

Undergoing major surgery can be scary and may affect one's physical and emotional wellbeing. Exercise, especially high intensity interval training (HIIT) has proven beneficial for cancer patients throughout different stages of treatment.

Several of our patients have been participants of this novel study by receiving HIIT exercises by their bedside with Eunice. The results so far have revealed that HIIT exercises immediately after major cancer surgery is safe and feasible and patients are enjoying their participation in the study.

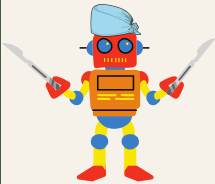
The HIITcancer study also recently won the category of '*Life Changing Research*' at the 2021 St Vincent's Melbourne Hospital Awards.



★ ★ ★
LIFE CHANGING
RESEARCH
AWARD 2021

Artificial Machine Learning in General Surgery

Artificial intelligence (AI) is the computer simulation of human cognitive processes. The use of AI in medicine and surgery is a rapidly growing field with wide ranging applications. Led by Dr Matthew Read, we are developing cutting edge artificial intelligence technology for use in keyhole gallbladder surgery in conjunction with the Department of Biomedical Engineering at the University of Melbourne. Our goal for this AI technology is to improve training and assessment of trainees as well as establishing additional safety mechanisms to reduce risk of complications and improve outcomes for patients. This study is led by PhD candidate Dr Henry Badgery.



Does the Gut Taste? Understanding Food Preferences after Weight Loss Surgery

Patients undergoing weight loss surgery can expect to lose 20-30% of their body weight. With most able to sustain that loss for at least 10 years. An unintended but common outcome is a reduced preference for sweet and fatty foods. We currently do not know why patients chose healthier food options after weight loss surgery. One theory involves changes to taste gut receptors. The same taste receptors found in taste buds on the tongue are also located all the way along the gut where they "sense" the presence of food. Whether these taste receptors after weight loss surgery is currently unknown. This study is led by PhD candidate Dr Rosalind Quincey O'Neill.





PARTNER Study



The recovery process after surgery for hepatobiliary and upper gastrointestinal cancer is physically and mentally demanding. Initiated in the 1990s, Enhanced Recovery after Surgery (ERAS) protocols were developed to provide surgery specific care pathways for patients undergoing surgery with the goal of improving patient outcomes, promoting early recovery and getting them home sooner.

Although patients receive a broad education on their hospital journey, they often lack a good practical understanding of post-surgery milestones and how they may participate in their recovery.

In this study, we will be developing an online resource for patients who will be undergoing surgery. The goal is to provide education and what to expect during their recovery in hospital. Patients will be encouraged to participate actively in their recovery by working together with their multidisciplinary health care team to discuss their daily recovery goals.



Gastrointestinal Community Engagement Program



We are looking for patients, carers and community members interested in health care to join our Gastrointestinal Community Engagement Program. People with little-to-no scientific background, of any age or gender are welcome to participate in gastrointestinal-related research projects. You don't need to have a medical or a scientific background; all you need is an interest in improving health care and working with researchers.

Development of an Artificial Intelligence-based Predictive Biomarker to Determine Response to Chemoradiotherapy in Oesophageal Cancer

Despite best available treatment, the prognosis for patients with oesophageal cancer, remains universally poor. Currently, patients with treatable disease, undergo chemotherapy alone, or in combination with radiotherapy, followed by high risk surgery. Only a minority of patients gain any significant benefit from the pre-operative treatment, with most being exposed to potential life threatening side effects chemo or radiotherapy (and the unnecessary risk of cancer progression).



We want to develop machine learning technology capable of predicting a patient's response to preoperative treatment. We hypothesise that the microscopic appearance of oesophageal cancer at the time of diagnosis contains clues regarding the likelihood of treatment response and that this can be predicted using machine learning based approaches. If successful, this approach will aid in developing personalised treatments for patients with oesophageal cancer.

Intraductal Papillary Mucinous Neoplasm (IPMN) Registry - A Tool to Predict Pancreatic Cancer

Pancreatic cancer is the 8th most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australia. Surgery remains the most effective treatment for early pancreatic cancer and currently the only potential for cure. Unfortunately, many patients present with advanced cancers. Therefore, it is important to detect these cancers early.



An intraductal papillary mucinous neoplasm (IPMN) is a benign pancreatic cyst in the ducts of your pancreas that could become cancerous. Currently, there is not enough information on how these pancreatic cysts become cancerous. This registry was set up to collect data from multiple Victorian hospitals to try to answer this question.

EVENTS



Sauce for a Cause

In August, we held our first fundraising sale on campus. A spread of sauces, condiments, biscuits and other treats were lovingly prepared by the members of our unit. Henry's Chilli oil and Michael's Marinara were the top favourites! We raised over \$1500, thank you to all who supported us!



Annual Fundraising Gala 2022

to support people living with gastrointestinal diseases



In April, patients, partners, surgeons and staff gathered (in-person!) to celebrate research achievements and fundraise for The HOPE Fund (formerly Surgeons Impact Fund). We raised an incredible amount which has gone towards further supporting projects like HIIT Cancer.

UPCOMING EVENT

HIIT FOR HOPE

Join us at Princes Park, Carlton for a day of HIIT exercises led by fitness guru and physician

Dr Esther Dindi #doctor_fitness_kenya

Bring your family/dog and come work out a sweat with us and refuel with a delicious BBQ after!



9am, 4th December, Sunday
Princes Park, Carlton

Keep an eye out on our website for more information:
<https://www.hpbugisurgery.org/fundraising-events>



POSSUM 2022

Don't forget to book your POSSUM tickets!

To book your tickets, please [click here](#) to register

OR visit

<https://possum2022.eventbrite.com.au>

OR ring

Eunice/Lynn on 03 9906 5626 to let us know!



Thank you!

To patients and families who have contributed to our innovations and research activities through the #TheHopeFund (Formerly known as the Surgeons Impact Fund). Without your donations, we would not be able to continue this work. We have many projects that are awaiting sufficient funds to begin. All donations are tax-deductable.

Visit our website for more info of all our current projects at <https://www.hpbugisurgery.org/projects>



**Stay safe and healthy and we hope to see you
at the annual POSSUM event in November!**