

Final Report at October 9, 2008

Medical Oncology Group of Australia Incorporated

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Australia and Asia Pacific Clinical Oncology Research Development (ACORD) Workshop is one of only three workshops of its kind worldwide. Introduced as a regional initiative by the Medical Oncology Group of Australia Incorporated (MOGA) in 2004, ACORD is now held biennially with the support of its collaborating partners: the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR), the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) and the Clinical Oncological Society of Australia (COSA). The Workshop is a six-day educational program targeting all disciplines of cancer research, to improve and advance clinical trial design in the Australia – Asia Pacific region.

The underpinning goals of ACORD consist of imparting principles of good clinical trial design which yield clear results to apply in the clinic and in future research, and exposing participants to the full spectrum of challenges in clinical research through the teaching and mentorship of the international Faculty. ACORD also provides a forum to foster trans-national relationships and to facilitate greater research cooperation across the Australia – Asia Pacific region.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2008

- ACORD 2008 was marketed extensively throughout the Asia-Pacific region to a range of organisations, facilities and workforce groups to attract a wider spectrum of professionals to the Workshop.
 - MOGA coordinated the program “in-house,” allowing for enhanced project management procedures to be implemented across all components of the program.
 - The Steering Committee actioned the longer term planning tasks of Faculty rotation and succession, leading to the successful appointment of 9 new Faculty members.
 - Program evaluation procedures and materials were reviewed and revised to provide a fuller range of planning data from the 2008 Workshop.
 - ACORD went wireless, with each delegate given an ACORD email address to communicate with each other. The previous years’ syllabus was also replaced with a sophisticated light handbook and a USB stick, pre-loaded with the course content and useful software.
 - The results of the Course Evaluation indicate that participants were overall very satisfied with the Workshop and the Faculty, and are inspired to carry on with their protocols developed on site.
- Looking forward, the ACORD Steering Committee has renewed its commitment to the program and has immediate plans to focus management attention on the issues of governance, development of the 2010 Workshop, evaluation, alumni and funding development, as well as international initiatives.



Participants Dr Siddhartha Baxi, Dr Gemma Hartnett
and Dr Marco Matos

FACULTY

The ACORD Faculty are global leaders in their respective fields, and the Workshop makes their expertise widely available to the participants through a range of activities. The Faculty's responsibilities included giving Lectures on a variety of topics related to developing clinical trials, leading smaller 'Protocol Groups' to facilitate focused collaborative learning and holding daily Office Hours to give individualised feedback to participants. The 22 International Faculty Members at the 2008 Workshop were:

Stephen Ackland, Calvary Mater Hospital, Newcastle, Australia
David Ball, Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute, Melbourne, Australia
Marc Buyse, Institute for Drug Development SC, Brussels, Belgium
Gary M. Clark, Array BioPharma, Boulder, USA
S. Gail Eckhardt, University of Colorado Health Science Centre, Denver, USA
Adrian Esterman, University of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia
Peta Forder, NHMRC Clinical Trials Centre, Sydney, Australia
Chris Frampton, Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Services, Christchurch, NZ
Madeleine King, Psycho-Oncology Co-operative Research Group, Sydney, Australia
Bogda Koczwara, Flinders Medical Centre, Adelaide, Australia
H. Kim Lyerly, Duke Comprehensive Cancer Centre, Durham, USA
Christina Ng, University Malaya Medical Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Anna Nowak, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, Nedlands, Australia
Purvish Parikh, Indian Co-operative Oncology Network, Mumbai, India
Jun Ren, Peking University, Beijing Cancer Hospital, Beijing, China
Jeff A. Sloan, Mayo Clinic and Research Facility, Minnesota, USA
Andrew Spencer, The Alfred Hospital, Prahan, Australia
Martin Stockler, NHMRC Clinical Trials Centre, Sydney, Australia
Chris Sweeney, Royal Adelaide Hospital Cancer Centre, Adelaide, Australia
Ian F. Tannock, Princess Margaret Hospital, Toronto, Canada
Patrick Therasse, Cancer Immunotherapeutics at GSK Biologicals, Rixensart, Belgium
David Ziegler, Sydney Children's Hospital, Sydney, Australia



The 2008 ACORD Faculty (from left): C. Frampton, J. Ren, D. Ziegler, P. Parikh, P. Forder, G. Clark, G. Eckhardt, A. Spencer, S. Ackland, J. Sloan, B. Koczwara, P. Therasse, M. Buyse, K. Lyerly, A. Esterman, M. King, C. Sweeney, I. Tannock, A. Nowak, D. Ball, C. Ng and M. Stockler

PROGRAM

The program is designed to optimise the time available over the six day workshop through a mixture of didactic sessions, interactive forums, free time for individual work and the occasional social break to network with colleagues. The full program kept both participants and the Faculty on an intense work schedule throughout the week.

Lectures & Practicals – Mornings were primarily dedicated to plenary sessions giving participants an overview of a number of relevant topics and skills, such as translational research, ethics, statistics and quality of life issues (see complete program on next page).

Small Group Discussions – Four concurrent discussions in specialised areas of interest were held on two occasions with a maximum of 15 participants at each to allow for effective group interaction.

Protocol Sessions – These sessions were an opportunity for the Protocol Groups, each led by 3 Faculty Members and capped at 9 participants, to discuss individual protocols and provide feedback on participants' progress made over the week.

Office Hours – These designated periods provided opportunities for participants to schedule one-on-one time with Faculty Members to address issues specific to their expertise.

Assignments & Tests – The Pre and Post Tests set markers to assess the learning over the course of the week. Regular assignments monitored by the Faculty ensured that participants made steady progress towards having their protocol completed by Friday evening.

Social Events – Three dinners and an afternoon Treasure Hunt ensured that participants had a chance to network with their international peers and socialise with the Faculty in an informal setting. The barbeque on Sunday served as a Welcome Dinner and the Gala Dinner on Friday celebrated the delegates' hard work over the week. The International Dinner gave delegates an opportunity to showcase their country (or state, for Australians) of origin.



A lecture from A/Prof Bogda Koczwara in progress



Dr Sarat Chander outlines his clinical trial concept to his Protocol Group



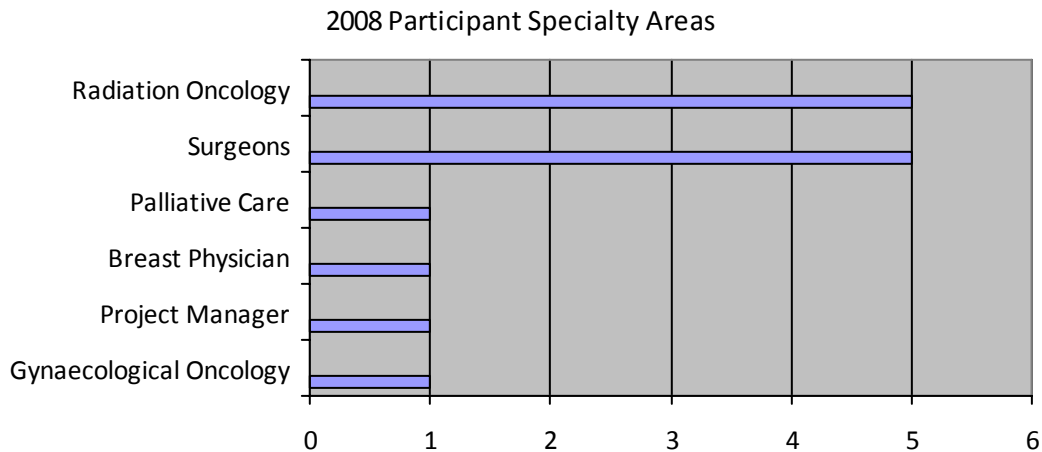
The Indian Delegation takes gold at the Olympic-themed International Night

2008 ACORD Workshop Program

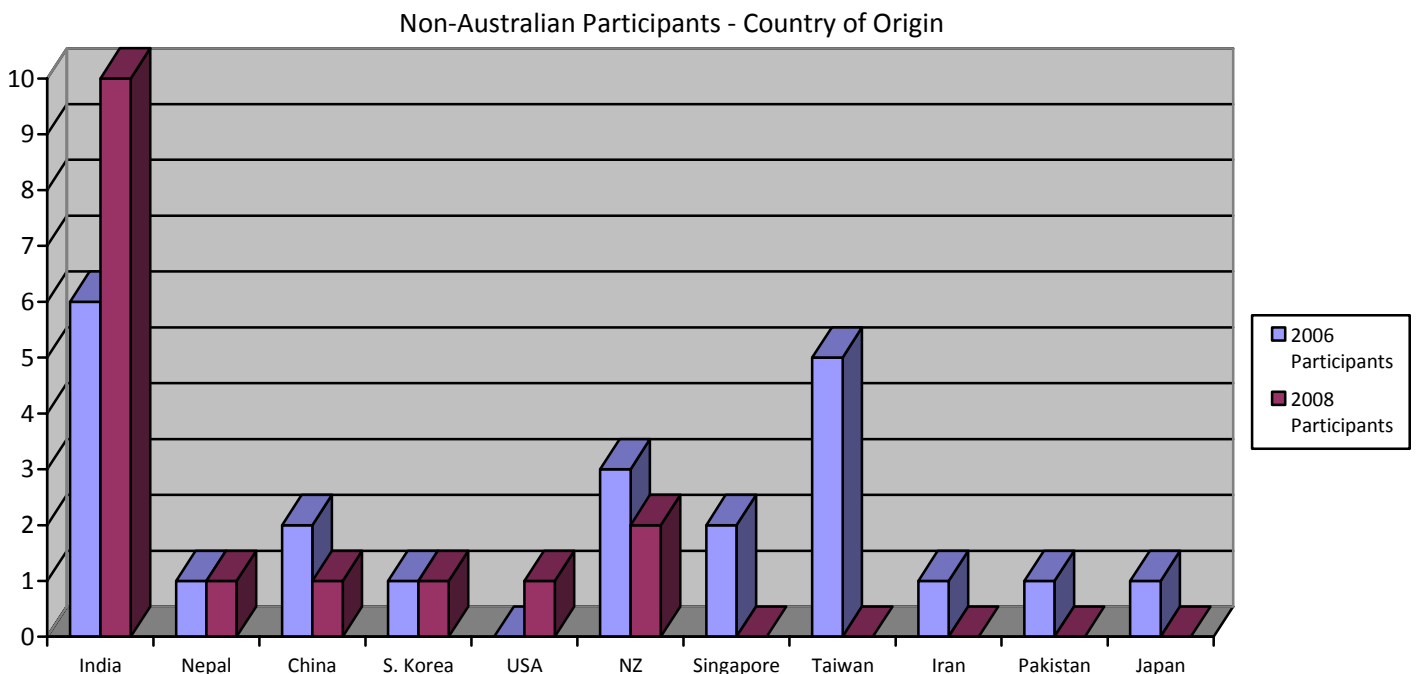
	Sunday, Aug 31	Monday, Sept 1	Tuesday, Sept 2	Wednesday, Sept 3	Thursday, Sept 4	Friday, Sept 5
7:30 – 8:30		Breakfast	Breakfast Faculty Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
8:30 - 10:30	10:00 Registration Opens	Lecture I 1. <i>General Principles</i> with Prof Purvish Parikh 2. <i>Phase I</i> with Prof S. Gail Eckhardt 3. <i>Phase II</i> with Prof Chris Sweeney	Lecture II 1. <i>Pharmacology/New Drug Development</i> with Prof Stephen Ackland 2. <i>Phase III</i> with Prof Patrick Therasse 3. <i>Translational Research</i> with A/Prof Andrew Spencer	Lecture III 1. <i>Quality of Life in Cancer Research</i> with Prof Jeff Sloan 2. <i>Special Considerations w/Radiotherapy & Combined Modality Trials</i> with A/Prof David Ball 3. <i>Population Research & Epidemiology</i> with A/Prof Chris Frampton	Group Discussions Repeated	Lecture IV 1. <i>Meta-analysis</i> with A/Prof Marc Buyse 2. <i>Project Management</i> with Dr Anna Nowak 3. <i>Writing Your Findings</i> with Prof Ian Tannock
10:30 – 11:00	Welcome Refreshments	Morning Tea	Morning Tea	Morning Tea	Morning Tea	Morning Tea
11:00 – 12:00		Practical: <i>Statistics I</i> with Dr Gary M. Clark & Ms Peta Forder	Practical: <i>Statistics II</i> with A/Prof Marc Buyse & Prof Madeleine King	Practical: <i>Ethics and Consent</i> with A/Prof Bogda Koczwara	Practical: <i>GCP & Regulatory Issues</i> with A/Prof Martin Stockler	Practical: <i>Money, Grants & Career Options</i> with Prof H. Kim Lyerly, Prof Stephen Ackland & A/Prof Bogda Koczwara
12:00 – 13:00		Lunch	Lunch & Group Photo	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
13:00		Protocol Session II	Protocol Session III	Group Discussions: • <i>Vaccines & Immunotherapy</i> with Prof H. Kim Lyerly • <i>Lab Correlates</i> with Prof Stephen Ackland • <i>Qualitative Research</i> with Prof Adrian Esterman • <i>Presentation skills</i> with Dr David Ziegler	Protocol Session IV	Protocol Session V
14:00 – 15:00	Pre Test-Participants Faculty Briefing					
15:00 – 16:00	Welcome with A/Prof Bogda Koczwara, Dr Ng, Dr Ziegler & Ms Janine Thomas	Free Work Time	Treasure Hunt	Free Work Time	Free Work Time	Afternoon Tea 15:30- 16:30 Post Test-Participants
16:00 – 16:30	Concept Sheet with Dr Christina Ng	16:00-17:30 Office Hours & Afternoon Tea		16:00-17:30 Office Hours & Afternoon Tea	16:00-17:30 Office Hours & Afternoon Tea	Faculty Meeting
16:30 – 19:00	Protocol Session I		17:00-18:30 Office Hours & Afternoon Tea			Free Work Time
19:30	19:00 Welcome	Concept Sheet Due	Free Work Time	Draft Protocol Due	Consent Form Due	Final Protocol Due
Evening	Dinner at the Poolfront Beach	Participants Free 19:00 Faculty Dinner		19:30 International Night at the Wandiny Ballroom	Free Work Time	19:30 Gala Dinner at Lily's on the Lagoon

PARTICIPANTS

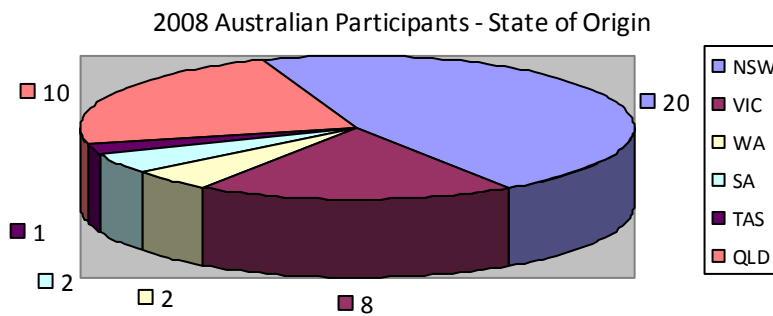
This year's 59 participants represented the best of a highly competitive pool of applicants, selected by the Steering Committee based on the proposed clinical trials that they wish to further develop at ACORD. The majority of the 2008 participants specialise in Medical Oncology (with 37 participants). Other areas of specialty include:



ACORD's mission extends beyond the protocols developed during the weeklong Workshop: to facilitate cooperation and advancement in oncological research across the Australia – Asia Pacific region. The Workshop participants represent a number of countries beyond Australia including:



Within Australia, participants travelled from across the country to the Sunshine Coast to be part of ACORD:



ACORD provides participants a forum for networking and collaborating with researchers outside of their home country or state, with the hope that the relationships formed during the Workshop are the basis for future regional development. An ACORD Alumni Meeting is planned for MOGA's 2009 Annual Scientific Meeting, in Canberra, ACT—a tradition set to be carried into the coming years to solidify and reinforce bonds developed at ACORD.

ACORD also provides a platform for personal development: 2008 Faculty member Christina Ng was a participant in the 2004 ACORD Workshop. Since then, she has become a champion for research collaboration in Malaysia, and the Steering Committee was excited to invite her back to share her experience and passion with this year's participants. 2008 Faculty member David Ziegler is another ACORD alumnus—after several years of training in early phase clinical trial design at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute, he is now heading the clinical trials unit in the Sydney Children's Hospital Oncology Department. Following his ACORD experience as a participant, he was keen to return in an instructive role. The ACORD program is designed in hopes of instilling a similar proactive passion for clinical research that extends beyond the Workshop into participants' future career plans.

WORKSHOP MARKETING

The high calibre of participants accepted this year can be attributed to the Steering Committee and Faculty's commitment to assisting in the marketing of the Workshop through their connections and reputations, and the strong word-of-mouth buzz generated by Alumni confirming the value of the ACORD experience for participants. The marketing efforts for the event were designed to support and enhance those two critical marketing factors. Major marketing activities included an extensive email campaign to regional and international organisations and publications, the maintenance of a website solely dedicated to the event and brochures for Faculty distribution in their home countries/hospitals/member organisations.

These efforts resulted in a series of website pages promoting the event, both from ACORD's collaborating partners ASCO, AACR, ESMO and COSA, along with Sydney Cancer Centre, the New South Wales Nurses' Association, and Touch Oncology. Articles on the event have also been published in newsletters, including that of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians. The true testament to the results of the marketing is the outstanding pool of applicants that the Steering Committee had to select from for the event.



The ACORD Website:
www.acordworkshop.org.au

BUDGET OUTCOMES

There were some significant cost-savings in this year's budget, primarily by conducting the logistical organisation of the Workshop through the MOGA Office. The savings allowed for a sophisticated new take on the Program Handbooks, and unprecedented content available on the Delegate USBs. Additionally, bringing the management of the conference "in-house" allowed for superior levels of quality control on the content and delivery of the weeklong program.

Other cost-savings came through a re-negotiation of the contract with the Novotel Twin Waters for the conference spaces to be used throughout the week, which also resulted in a more intimate, centralised effect on the ground. A novel approach to food vouchers for participants also saw significant savings over the week. Looking forward to ACORD 2010, some key budget initiatives involve changing ground transportation vendors and re-evaluating the manner in which the formal dinners are set out.

EVALUATION OUTCOMES

Both the Learning and Course Evaluations had markedly positive results, which indicated that not only did Participants perceive the Workshop to be useful, but their collective knowledge had in fact increased over the course of the week.



Participants taking the Pre Test

The Learning Evaluation comprised of a Pre and Post Test at the beginning and at the completion of the week. The test was comprised of 45 multiple choice questions, designed by the Faculty to cover specific topics that would be addressed in their respective

lecture sessions. The Pre Test set the benchmark of the groups' existing knowledge on the various topics. The results of the Post Test then demonstrated the extent of the knowledge gained across the week. There was especial advancements in knowledge in the areas of combined modality trials, phase I trials, ethics, GCP issues, quality of life and biostatistics.

The Course Evaluation gave the delegates a chance to share anonymous feedback on their experience over the week. The results were overwhelmingly positive. 43 out of 60 respondents rated their overall Workshop experience as "Very Satisfied" (the highest rating) and the other 17 selected "Satisfied." The Faculty overall were also very well rated with 46 "Very Satisfied" responses and 14 "Satisfied." The majority of respondents were also "Very Satisfied" with receiving a better understanding of trials and help in developing their protocol.

Some final comments from delegates' Course Evaluations:

"Overall a great event and I would highly recommend it to others. Great faculty & interaction."

"Very approachable faculty. Very motivating. Definitely increases interest in further research."

"It was an amazing experience for me, thank you."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to our partners and sponsors, whose continued support not only makes the ACORD Workshop possible, but also ensures that we can invite world-class international Faculty and support the most competitive participants from across the Australia – Asia Pacific region who otherwise would not have the means to join the Workshop. We would like to acknowledge our **Collaborating Organisations:**



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For further information please contact the Medical Oncology Group of Australia at moga@moga.org.au or on +61-2-8247-6210.