



Australia & Asia Pacific Clinical Oncology Research Development Workshop 2006



“Simply wonderful”

The second ACORD workshop, held on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland from 3-9 September 2006, has again proved to be an outstanding success.

“The feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive,” said Dr Koczwara, chair of the ACORD Program Committee. “Participants have highlighted the excellent educational value of the workshop, the outstanding and dedicated faculty, and the hard work but immense satisfaction associated with writing a complete clinical trial protocol in the space of a week.”

Sixty-three participants from 12 different countries took part in the intensive week-long workshop during which each student developed a clinical research concept into a complete clinical trial protocol to be implemented in their home institution.

An international faculty of twenty-one members, drawn from leading world experts in the field of clinical trials design, assisted participants with the development of their protocols, serving as advisors and mentors.

“The ACORD Workshop is a fabulous opportunity for young researchers from the region to learn critical skills in

conducting clinical research, to meet inspiring mentors and to establish networks which will form the foundations of future regional research collaborations”, said Dr Koczwara.

“This is particularly important for those participants from developing countries that have very limited cancer services and research expertise. We hope to inspire and support them in their endeavours to make meaningful improvements to cancer care in their home countries”, she said.

“Of special note, Professor Ian Frazer, who was named Australian of the Year for his work in developing a vaccine against the human papilloma virus which causes cervical cancer, gave the opening speech at the Workshop.

“As cervical cancer is very common in across Asia, Professor Frazer was an inspiring role model for the young cancer researchers in attendance,” Dr Koczwara said.

“This Workshop provides an excellent pragmatic introduction o the fundamentals of clinical trials from respected and experienced clinical trials groups around the world”

ACORD Participant

Workshop Format

The Workshop consisted of an intensive week of lectures, small group discussions, protocol development sessions and one-on-one mentoring, in addition to individual protocol writing. The sessions covered a broad range of topics from biostatistics to trial design and grant writing and presentation skills.

Long Term Outcomes

The long term outcomes of the Workshop are being evaluated to determine its effectiveness in achieving its objectives of developing a cadre of well trained experienced researchers whose expertise will foster better clinical trials design and collaborative networks across the region.

Participants are surveyed annually to determine how many of the protocols developed at the Workshop are implemented and to track the clinical research careers of participants.

Results from the inaugural 2004 ACORD Workshop have been very positive.

74% of participants responded to the first annual follow-up survey, reporting high levels of satisfaction with the Workshop and its positive effects on their research skills and career development.

All respondents advised that their clinical trial protocol had been well received at their home institution and 67% (n=29) reported that progress had been made in implementing their trial.

Most of the respondents were also involved in other clinical research, with

"[The Workshop] has been a wonderfully and highly satisfying experience. My thanks and congratulations to all organisers."

ACORD Participant

84% participating in other studies, 56% developing other protocols of their own and 35% leading other trials.

An alumni association has also been established to allow participants to keep in touch with each other and to encourage networking which can serve as a starting point to establish collaborative research projects in the region in future.

The Future of ACORD

Given the success of the first two workshops, the ACORD Workshop will now be a regular biannual event and planning is now underway for the next workshop which will be held in 2008.

There are also plans to expand the ACORD initiative to include additional programs to support clinical research and collaborations within the region

Cancer rates in Asia currently exceed those in Europe and the United States combined, but many countries in the region have only limited cancer research capacity and infrastructure. In this context the need to build local skills and increase collaboration in the region is paramount. The ACORD workshop is an example of how Australia can contribute to this effort.

ACORD Participants 2006



ACORD 2006 Faculty



Back row: M Stockler, A Esterman, N Pavlakis, M Green, Z Aziz, I Olver, B Koczwara, I Tannock, G Eckhardt, S Hilsenbeck, P Forder, E Beller, J Abbruzzese, C Frampton. Front row: S Ackland, D Ball, P Parikh, T Hughes, B Zee, K Lyerly

James Abbruzzese

MD Anderson Cancer Centre
Houston, Texas, USA

Stephen Ackland

Mater Misericordiae Hospital,
Newcastle, Australia

Zeba Aziz

Allama Iqbal Medical College, Lahore,
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David Ball

Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute,
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Elaine Beller

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Mark Buyse

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Gail Eckhardt

University of Colorado Health Science
Centre, Denver, USA

Adrian Esterman

University of South Australia, Adelaide,
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Peta Forder

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Chris Frampton

Christchurch School of Medicine and Health
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Susan Hilsenbeck

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Bogda Koczwara

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Hong Kong, Hong Kong



Australia & Asia Pacific Clinical Oncology Research Development Workshop 2004

The organisers would like to thank the many collaborating and supporting organisations and corporate sponsors for their invaluable support and contribution to ACORD and we look forward to their continued support in future.

Acknowledgements

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