
Chiffon cakes, brownies, ANZAC biscuits, zucchini muffins - there were difficult decisions to be made at our latest fund-raising event. On Thursday 21st June staff from the Kolling Institute Tumour Bank (KITB) together with the University of Sydney Northern Clinical School hosted an Australia’s Biggest Morning Tea event to raise much needed funds for the Cancer Council. With delicious homemade donations coming from the kitchens of staff members from the Kolling Institute and Northern Clinical School, peckish customers had an inviting array of baked goods to satisfy their mid-morning cravings. The Cancer Council works tirelessly to help all Australians affected by cancer. The aim of the charity is to help people from the point of diagnosis, throughout the duration of their treatment, and onwards to survivorship. The Cancer Council focuses on four main pillars:

- **Support** - providing information and guidance for thousands of Australians affected by cancer
- **Research** - directing more money into cancer research than any other charity
- **Prevention** - creating programs encouraging people to lead healthier lives and reduce their cancer risk
- **Advocacy** - working towards improving policies to reduce cancer risks and increase cancer resources

Researchers at the Kolling Institute have benefited from grants awarded by the Cancer Council, which have helped support research into new diagnostic tests and more precise cancer treatments. By raising money for the Cancer Council, the Kolling Institute and The University of Sydney’s Northern Clinical School is supporting the charity’s aim of improving both the outcome for cancer patients and the services available to them throughout their treatment.

After a very successful few hours of selling cakes, biscuits and raffle tickets, the Kolling Institute Tumour Bank and Northern Clinical School managed to raise close to $1000. The KITB would like to say a huge thank you to all staff at the Kolling Institute who made this event possible, and to the following local companies for their generous donations - Priceline St Leonards, Pierre Fabre, Bunnings Artarmon, Fancy That Costumes and Hudson Coffee St Leonards.
THINKING AHEAD - BRAIN BANKING AT THE KOLLING TUMOUR BANK

Brain tumour samples have been collected from patients having surgery at Royal North Shore Hospital and North Shore Private Hospital as part of the Kolling Institute Tumour Bank since 2003. The rare nature of brain cancer subtypes means that it can take many years to accumulate sufficient specimens for research. Now 15 years old, the Brain Bank at the Kolling Institute is a mature and invaluable resource for research into the various types of this malignancy. Since its inception, the bank has contributed to numerous local and international studies into brain cancer.

Two recent landmark projects have undertaken research using samples from the Kolling Bank to study a common form of childhood brain cancer known as medulloblastoma.

- Florence Cavalli and her team from The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, Canada led a collaborative study that identified 12 different subtypes of this cancer that have different biology and clinical outcomes. These findings have important implications for the classification of patients for future clinical trials.

- Sorana Morrissy, also from The Hospital for Sick Children, led a collaborative study that demonstrated striking genetic changes in medulloblastomas over time. They found that genetic changes present at diagnosis were unlikely to be present in the majority of cancer cells at recurrence. These results could have significant outcomes for the treatment of patients with recurrent medulloblastoma.

The Kolling Brain Tumour Bank also underpins much of the laboratory-based research of The Brain Cancer Group at the Kolling Institute. The Group was invited to present their research at the 2016 Society for Neuro-Oncology Annual Meeting in the USA, the premier international conference for neuro-oncology. The research by Drs Nicole Parker, Amanda Hudson and others demonstrated that the same glioblastoma can exhibit different genetic and genomic characteristics in varying parts of the tumour and that this may complicate the interpretation of predictive biomarker results.

In another research project looking into glioblastoma, Dr Amanda Hudson identified significant inflammatory status changes between primary and recurrent tumour specimens. These results have important implications for the application of new immunotherapeutic approaches to treating glioblastoma.

In research funded by the Mark Hughes Foundation for Brain Cancer, PhD student Angela Cho is assessing how low grade tumours with errors in a gene called IDH change when they recur and progress. This is a rare brain cancer subtype and it has taken 10 years to amass sufficient primary and recurrent specimens to study, with some cases collected up to 9 years apart. Understanding how these tumours both change over time, and in response to therapy will lay the foundations for developing better treatments for this rare form of brain cancer.

The above research projects, which are increasing our understanding of brain tumours and improving management of patients with these tumours, would not have been possible without the patients who donated their tissues to the Kolling Institute Tumour Bank.

For more information about The Brain Cancer Group (previously known as Sydney Neuro-Oncology Group) visit: www.braincancergroup.com.au/
On June 12th, staff from the Tumour Bank attended a Biobanking Conference organised by Professor Jennifer Byrne and her team through the Cancer Institute NSW. This conference was held in the Kerry Packer Auditorium at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. The theme of the conference was ‘Improving biobank standards – local and global perspectives’. After a welcoming address from Dr Kerry Chant, NSW Chief Health Officer, the morning began with speakers representing the Cancer Institute NSW, the Office for Health and Medical Research, NSW Health Statewide Biobank and the University of Sydney. A keynote presentation came from Professor Peter Watson from the University of British Columbia. Highlighting the theme of the conference, Prof Watson gave an international perspective on biobanking standards and how the local biobanking community can assess and implement these principles.

After a lunch break, the conference turned its focus to biobanking at the state level. Speakers from The Children’s Hospital at Westmead, Royal Prince Alfred, Liverpool Hospital and the Westmead Institute for Medical Research gave insightful talks about current issues facing biobanks in NSW, including a new NSW certification program for biobanks and linking health data to biospecimens.

Professor Deborah Marsh, academic head of our Kolling Institute Tumour Bank (KITB), gave the conference an overview of the ongoing pilot project involving the KITB and the Royal North Shore Hospital Anatomical Pathology department, which was discussed in the last edition of the KITB newsletter. This project has been designed to bring together diagnostic and research laboratories to improve efficiencies of biobanking for research. It has enabled a better understanding of the two different environments and developed tools to assist busy diagnostic departments to accommodate research biobanking with minimal disruption to important workflows.

The final session of the conference began with Associate Professor Dan Catchpoole, head of the Tumour Bank at The Children’s Hospital at Westmead, outlining international recommendations for best practices in biobanking discussed at the recent ISBER (International Society for Biological and Environmental Repositories) meeting in Dallas, Texas. A/Prof Catchpoole stressed that research biobanking is a very human activity, relying on many connections and emphasised how well Australian researchers are connected internationally in this field. Prof Sunil of the University of Queensland closed the conference discussing networks of Australian biobanking activities.

This one day biobanking conference was a great opportunity for members of the local biobanking community to come together and form personal and professional connections. As referenced in several talks throughout the day, there are numerous biobanks of varying sizes across NSW. Each of these biobanks are facing similar issues surrounding regulation, improving biospecimen quality, obtaining clinical data and attracting potential researchers and collaborators. Conferences such as this one attended by the KITB staff allow experts from different areas of biobanking to relay their experiences to a wider audience, with the aim of sharing knowledge to help tackle many of these common issues.

For more information on the biobanking conference visit www.cancerbiobanksnsw.org/news-and-events
Do you want to help us find a cure for cancer?

The University of Sydney’s Kolling Institute of Medical Research located at Royal North Shore Hospital needs you to join us in the fight against cancer.

To help find a cure, we are analysing blood samples from cancer patients and comparing them with those from healthy volunteers.

We are looking for healthy volunteers who:
- Have not had cancer
- Have not donated to our banks before
- Are over the age of 18 (no upper age limit)
- Have not been hospitalised in the last 6 months

If you are interested in participating please contact us on 9926 4771 to arrange a time.

This project has been approved by the Northern Sydney Local Health District Human Research Ethics Committee
Version 1. 3rd July 2014

CONTACT US
Office: (02) 9926 4771
Hours: 8:30am-5:00pm
Website: www.sydneyvital.org.au/biobank/

The Kolling Institute Tumour Bank relies solely on grants to build and maintain the collection of samples required to allow important medical research to continue. If you would like to make a donation to support the running of our tumour bank we would love to hear from you.

Please visit the Sydney Vital website and click on the ‘Make a Donation’ tab to complete our donation form.

www.sydneyvital.org.au/biobank

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