

# 2021 Annual Scientific Meeting Report of the High Blood Pressure Research Council of Australia

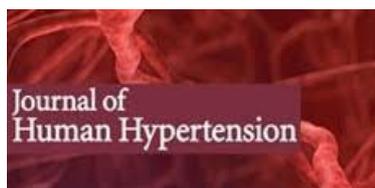
*Held virtually, December 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>*



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## Contents

<b>Annual Scientific Meeting Overview</b> .....	3
<b>ECR Symposium</b> .....	5
<b>Pressure Wise</b> .....	7
<b>Women in Hypertension Session</b> .....	8
<b>Paediatric Symposium</b> .....	9
<b>Gut Microbiome Symposium</b> .....	9
<b>Speakers</b> .....	9
<b>HBPRCA Awards 2021</b> .....	10
<b>Sponsors</b> .....	12

## Annual Scientific Meeting Overview

In 2021, the High Blood Pressure Research Council of Australia held its second virtual Annual Scientific Meeting with a greater hybrid focus. State hubs organised in Melbourne, Sydney, Perth, and Tasmania meant that registrants were able to watch the Annual Scientific Meeting together, emulating the social aspect of Face-to-Face events.

This meeting took place completely virtually on the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> of December with additional events on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of December. The overall program was created once again by our amazing Joint Program Managers A/Prof. Francine Marques and Dr. Bradley Broughton, pictured below.



Click [HERE](#) to view the PDF program of the Annual Scientific Meeting including all speaker biographies and presentations.

A total of 69 abstracts overall, including invited speakers, were submitted for the meeting from across Australia as follows:

NSW	15
QLD	3
TAS	6
VIC	38
WA	7

Feedback received from the first Virtual Meeting in 2020 allowed for better improvements and efficiency in 2021. These improvements saw great attendee feedback such as 90% of responders would be very likely to attend a HBPRCA ASM in the future. In addition, we gathered that 55% would prefer the meeting to be held Hybrid, with face-to-face components and 45% would prefer the meeting to be held face-to-face.

The 2021 virtual meeting also saw a change in platform. This year, we held the event on the industry leading platform, EventsAIR. Through this software, we were able to present the audience with a closer experience to what the Face-to-Face event would have been. EventsAIR offered interactive features such as polling, Q&A, and the discussion forum. Excitingly, the Meeting Hub elevated virtual networking to a new level. Attendees were able

to connect with other attendees, speakers, and sponsors, having the opportunity to set up meetings, make calls, exchange details and more. This platform was well received with 75% finding the platform 'Good' or 'Excellent'.

During this Virtual Meeting all poster authors were given the opportunity to present live in EventsAIR, which gave their abstracts maximum exposure and granted better networking opportunities. The concurrent poster breakouts were very well attended and fostered engaging live Q&A.

We had a host of international speakers present their expertise and expose attendees to new knowledge. Of our international speakers we had Professor Neil Poulter of Imperial College London deliver the RD Wright Lecture, a true pleasure and one highlight of the meeting's opening day. Professor Joseph Flynn of the University of Washington School of Medicine delivered a standout presentation on 'Paediatric Hypertension'. Our female international speakers also delivered exceptional presentations, Dr Annet Kirabo who received the 2020 AHA Award of Vanderbilt University Medical Center on 'The Immunology of Salt-Sensitive Hypertension: Basic and Clinical Aspects' and Dr Anna Price who received the 2019 BIHS award.

New this year was our state based hubs, which were extremely well received by all as they gave an opportunity for colleagues to network and catch up after a long 18 months. Hubs were attended in Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart, and Perth.

Standout comments include...

100% of respondents finding the program relevant

"Student and ECR Oral Presentation Sessions were a stand out"

100% of respondents are likely or very likely to attend again.

"The online format for the meeting is really impressive!"

## Meeting Highlights.

### ECR Symposium

The meeting incorporated a very successful Early Career Researcher Symposium on Friday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December, that was organised by the ECR committee and attracted 151 registrants from over 18 countries including Australia, Chile, Ghana, Indonesia, USA, and South Africa. We thank Dr Quynh Nhu Dinh, Dr Dean Picone, Dr Revathy Carnagarin and Dr Hamdi Jama for their invaluable involvement.

The symposium held many presentations on significant topics such as harassment at conferences, how to identify harassment, experiences of harassment, peer review and mentor/mentee relationships – including perspectives from successful and challenging relationships. Small panel breakout rooms were held in the third session that discussed career pathways and topics ranging from academia to policy making. The interactivity provided in the Symposium meant closer engagement between parties and greater value for participants in relation to their career.

“ That was fantastic – thank you!”

“Great talk and tips Julie!”

“Thanks for a great session Spo”

Our speakers and program of the event follow:



Prof. Rebecca Ritchie



Prof. Julie Redfern



A/Prof. Francine Marques



Dr Niamh Chapman



Dr Dean Picone



Dr Michael De Silva



Ms Julie Anne Mitchell



A/Prof. Rebecca Lim

Additional speakers: Ms Spomenka Krismanic, Dr Craig Don Paul & Prof. John Skerrit

Program:

### HBPRCA ASM ECR Symposium 2021

Date: Friday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>

#### Session 1: Harassment at conferences

Topic	Speaker	Time (AEST)
Welcome	ECR committee	12:50-12:55
Experiences of harassment at conferences	Prof Rebecca Ritchie (Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences)	12:55-13:05
Workshop: How to identify harassment and where to get help	Ms Spomenka Krismanic (La Trobe University; Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager)	13:05-13:35
Break		13:35-13:45

#### Session 2

Topic	Speaker	Time (AEST)
Peer review	Prof Julie Redfern (The University of Sydney)	13:45-13:55
Peer review Q&A		13:55-14:00
Perspective from a mentor	A/Prof Francine Marques (Monash University)	14:00-14:05
Perspective from a mentee	Dr Niamh Chapman (University of Tasmania)	14:05-14:10
Perspective from a mentee whose relationship drifted apart	Dr Dean Picone (University of Tasmania)	14:10-14:15
Mentoring Q&A	A/Prof Francine Marques, Dr Niamh Chapman, Dr Dean Picone	14:15-14:20

#### Session 3: Career pathways

Panel breakout rooms (10 min per room)

Attendees will rotate between each breakout room

Topic	Speaker	Time (AEST)
Traditional academia	Dr Michael De Silva (La Trobe University; Researcher and lecturer)	14:20-15:10
Consulting	Dr Craig Don Paul (Griffith Hack, Trainee Patent Attorney)	
Policy making	Ms Julie Ann Mitchell (Heart Foundation; National Director Health Strategy)	
Industry	A/Prof Rebecca Lim (Prescient Therapeutics; Director of Scientific Affairs)	
Government	Prof John Skerritt (Head of Therapeutic Goods Administration)	
Break		15:10-15:30

#### Session 4: Networking/socializing breakout rooms (15:30 to 16:00)

## Pressure Wise – in partnership with the Heart Foundation

Pressure Wise is an excellent initiative of the Public Engagement portfolio, headed by Dr. Rachel Climie, and the ECR Committee. The free community event which was held on Wednesday the 1<sup>st</sup> of December had 65 participants from multiple countries around the world and focused on improving the knowledge of blood pressure and heart health.

The high calibre of speakers included Dr Dean Picone, Dr Anastasia Mihailidou, A/Prof. Ralph Audehm and Mrs Anne Wilk. There were leading experts of high blood pressure and a Heart Foundation representative present, in whom cemented the importance of managing high blood pressure and having regular heart health checks. Members of the public were welcomed to join in and ask questions to our high blood pressure experts in the designated panel.

Pressure Wise and our speakers received highly regarded feedback from participants:

**“This was a very informative session and added considerably to my knowledge and understanding of BP”**

**“Excellent presentation, great speakers and informative”**



**Pressure Wise -  
An initiative of the HBPRCA in partnership with  
the Heart Foundation and supported by Servier**

## Women in Hypertension Session

Carrying on from last year's highly successful Women in Hypertension Spotlight Session, the 2021 Annual Scientific Meeting featured another session to highlight the women in hypertension, developed by Dr Audrey Adji and Dr Anastasia Mihailidou. The session was presented in Zoom with chairs Dr Anastasia Mihailidou and Dr Audrey Adji. Engagement was at the forefront with a highly valued panel discussion and breakout rooms where participants were able to explore the topics of career and strategy more extensively. We were also delighted to have Dr Annet Kirabo, the winner of the 2020 American Hypertension Award, give the closing comments to end a significant session.

The second Women in Hypertension session proved to be well received and equally as esteemed as 2020. Hear what our participants had to say:

“Thank to all the presenters for sharing your journey Well done all!”

“Thank you everyone for sharing your wonderful stories.”

“Thank you so much for this session!!”

We thank the following speakers for their involvement:



Dr Ashenafi Betrie



Dr Anastasia Mihailidou



Dr Isabella Tan



Dr Priscilla Prestes



Dr Audrey Adji



Dr Annet Kirabo

## Paediatric Symposium

The Paediatric Blood Symposium was held on the 6th of December and a joint initiative of HBPRCA, the Blood Pressure in Australian Children Network (BPOzKids) and the Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI). The symposium had more than 130 registrations, included three keynote lectures from leading international experts on paediatric hypertension and epidemiology, as well as 6 invited talks covering topics such as paediatric hypertension in Australia, secondary hypertension in children, long term impact of prematurity on blood pressure, and emerging research from early career researchers. We had an interactive roundtable discussion regarding priorities for three BPOzKids working groups that will be established in 2022 (Epidemiology and Public Health, Australian Paediatric Guidelines, and BP measurement accuracy/implementation).

## Gut Microbiome Symposium

On 7 December, we held the Gut Microbiome in Cardiovascular Disease Symposium, a joint initiative from the HBPRCA and the School of Biological Sciences, Monash University. We received 247 registrations from colleagues across the world and had a strong attendance through the day. We had 20 high quality presentations and great discussions about the future of the field. We welcome all interested in this area to submit a paper to a special edition on microbiome for the Journal of Human Hypertension.

## Speakers

Our 2021 HBPRCA keynote and invited name lecturers delivered a plethora of important and engaging presentations that were highly received by this year's attendees. Although again presented virtually, the speakers were still as captivating as ever. We were very fortunate to hear from the following HBPRCA keynote invited named lecturers:

The 2021 RD Wright Lecture was given by **Professor Neil Poulter** of Imperial College London. Professor Poulter's presentation was extremely well received by all.

The 2021 Austin E Doyle Lecture was given by **Professor Clare Collins** of the University of Newcastle. Professor Collins' presentation 'Creating Impact in Nutrition and Dietetic Research' was very fascinating and enjoyed by all.

The 2021 Colin I Johnston Lecture was given by **Professor Clara Chow** of the University of Sydney. Professor Chow's presentation 'Blood pressure control and my journey that led to QUARTET' was very well received.

HBPRCA were pleased to receive a splendid lecture from the 2020 American Hypertension Association (AHA) award winner **Dr Annet Kirabo** of the USA. Dr Kirabo gave a highly engaging presentation on 'The Immunology of Salt-Sensitive Hypertension: Basic and Clinical Aspects'

We are delighted the 2019 British and Irish Hypertension Society (BIHS) winner, **Dr Anna Price** from Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust was able to make it this year. Dr Price's presentation on 'Effect of a reduction in glomerular filtration rate after nephrectomy on arterial stiffness and central haemodynamics: the EARNEST study' was greatly received.

## HBPRCA Awards 2021

A host of talent within HBPRCA membership was again recognised and rewarded in 2021 including the presentation of a range of oral and poster awards. A hearty congratulations goes out to all the worthy recipients below.

### **The Robert Vandongen award:**

The Robert Vandongen award is presented for the highest scoring abstract submitted by a member from Western Australia.

The 2021 Robert Vandongen award went to **Dr Lakshini Herat from University of Western Sydney.**

### **The Judith Whitworth award:**

Prof Judith Whitworth was the first woman to be elected as the president of the HBPRCA (1999-2001). Throughout her career, Prof Whitworth not only contributed to a major way to high blood pressure research herself, and to the mechanisms involved in steroid-related hypertension, but broke numerous barriers and paved a path for women in research, clinical practice and policy making. The Judith Whitworth award goes to the highest ranked HBPRCA member abstract for which the first author is a woman.

The 2021 Judith Whitworth award winner was **Buddhila Wickramasinghe from La Trobe University.**

### **The Jaye Chin-Dusting Mid-Career Scientist award:**

Prof Jaye Chin-Dusting was the second woman to be elected as the president of the HBPRCA (2011-2016). As a founder of the Australian Cardiovascular Alliance, Prof Chin-Dusting was deeply concerned with the funding available for cardiovascular disease, which affects particularly those in the early- and mid-stages of their career. During her presidency of the HBPRCA, she also established the young investigator subcommittee of the HBPRCA, to improve training, networking, and opportunities for early and mid-career high blood pressure researchers.

A mid-career scientist (between 5-20 years post PhD) who is an active researcher will receive the Jaye Chin-Dusting Award. The 2021 Winner of the Jaye Chin-Dusting Mid-Career Scientist in High Blood Pressure Research award went to **Professor James Sharman of Menzies Institute for Medical Research**.

### **The Paul Korner Senior Scientist in High Blood Pressure Research award:**

Prof Paul Korner was one of the founders and a former president of the HBPRCA (1987-1989). He devoted a large part of his career to researching the causes of essential hypertension, with a special focus on underlying neural and cardiovascular mechanisms. A senior scientist (>20 years post-PhD) who is an active researcher and has made a significant contribution to high blood pressure and the HBPRCA receives the Paul Korner Senior Scientist in High Blood Pressure Research Medal.

This year's worthy recipient is **Professor Geoffrey Head from the Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute**.

### **Student and Early Career Researcher Awards:**

2021 saw a great range of high-quality Student and Early Career Research oral and poster submissions. The effort in their work have been appreciated by all, and congratulations extend to the following winners:

The HBPRCA 2021 Student Poster award went to: **Hamdi Jama** of Monash University

The HBPRCA 2021 Student Oral award went to: **Tayla Hughes** of La Trobe University

The HBPRCA 2021 Early Career Researcher Poster award went to: **Quynh Nhu Dinh** of La Trobe University

The HBPRCA 2021 Early Career Researcher Oral award went to: **Dr Sarah Walton** of Monash University

The nominees for the American Heart Association 2021 goes to **Tayla Hughes** of La Trobe University and **Dr Sarah Walton** of Monash University. Congratulations to these women.

Each of the 2 oral winners, Tayla Hughes, and Sarah Walton, also get to attend either the BIHS or the AHA meeting in 2022.

The AHA award winner will attend the AHA 2022 meeting, to be determined whether they will present virtually or in person.

The person attending AHA 2022

will be Tayla Hughes from La Trobe University

The BIHS award winner will attend the BIHS 2022 meeting, to be determined whether they will present virtually or in person.

The person attending BIHS 2022 will be Sarah Walton from the Monash University

(These awards are subject to travel restrictions easing)

## Sponsors

HBPRCA would like to extend a huge thank you to our sponsors who have continued supporting us through this turbulent year and without whom none of this would be possible. Sponsors for the 2021 Virtual Annual Scientific Meeting brought a range of entertaining and factual videos to this year's ASM and are as follows:

**Medtronic**  
Further, Together



**Platinum Sponsor:** Medtronic presented us with a video between Prof. Markus Schlaich and Dr Sharad Shetty about uncontrolled hypertension, contemporary therapeutic approaches, and Renal Denervation

**Gold Sponsor:** Servier, who are running their Global BP Awareness Campaign 'Because I say so!' which encourages BP checking in the community.



**Bronze Sponsor:** Omron sponsored the prestigious Colin I Johnston Lecture and the Student Oral Finalists



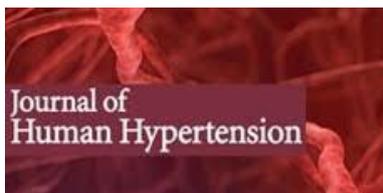
**Bronze Sponsor:** CSL



**Sponsor:** Monash Biomedicine Discovery Institute – Cardiovascular Disease



**Austin Doyle Sponsor:** A&D sponsored the esteemed Austin Doyle Lecture



**Sponsor:** Journal of Human Hypertension sponsored the ECR Oral Finalists



**Sponsor:** Integrated Sciences who sponsored the Gut Microbiome Symposium

We thank you all for attending and participating in our 2021 Virtual Annual Scientific Meeting.

**The High Blood Pressure Research Council of Australia.**