

2013  
RESEARCH  
REPORT  
ONCOLOGY

# ONCOLOGY

The Eastern Health Oncology service conducts clinical research in collaboration with Monash University as part of the Eastern Clinical Research Unit (ECRU) partnership at Box Hill and Maroondah hospitals.

Clinical studies are pharmaceutical-sponsored and investigator-lead studies from cooperative groups. The clinical studies are divided into tumour streams including breast, colorectal, genitourinary, gynaecology, lung, melanoma and upper gastrointestinal malignancies. The unit also operates a phase I clinical trial clinic allowing patients of Eastern Health access to novel agents at both the Royal Melbourne Hospital and Olivia Newton John Cancer Centre.

## Director of Oncology/Cancer Services Eastern Health

Dr Phillip Parente

Clinical trial activity by the service is exceptionally high. With an ability to recruit large number of patients and a reputation for excellence in accordance with Good Clinical Practice, Eastern Health's oncology team is sought after with respect to becoming an Australian site with most national and international oncological clinical trials:

Examples include:

- **PROSELICA study**

The primary research question of this project is looking into the safety between two doses of Cabazitaxel, a chemotherapy agent used in second-line castrate resistant metastatic prostate cancer. Eastern Health has 18 patients participating in the study. Participation in this trial has allowed patients access to this drug before its PBS listing.

- **Abiraterone Acetate EAP trial**

This project is investigating a new hormonal agent in castrate resistant metastatic prostate cancer. 22/100 of the Australian participants in this international study are Eastern Health patients. Twenty-two Australian sites participated in this trial thus the level of Eastern Health patient participation is testament to the recruiting capacity of Eastern Health and the diligent work ethic of the clinical trial staff.

- **Nivolumab (novel agent trial)**

Nivolumab, is an inhibitor of PD1 which enables tumour cells to become invisible to the immune system analogous to a cloaking mechanism. Nivolumab blocks this, enabling the immune system to recognise the tumour cell as foreign resulting in tumour cell death.

The phase 1 data of this agent in melanoma was presented at ASCO 2013 and showed a 40 per cent response rate in Nivolumab alone and 70 per cent response rate when combined with an immune enhancing agent Ipilimumab. Based on our reputation, Eastern Health was selected and has opened two studies with this agent in melanoma and renal cell cancer. Nivolumab has attracted major media attention resulting in patients across Victoria being referred to our tertiary institution to potentially gain access to this agent.

The oncology research unit consists of seven clinical trial coordinators. In 2013 the team was joined by our first full-time research fellow Anna Lomax along with part-time research fellow Hui-Li Wong from the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research.

A high proportion of the service's collaborative clinical trials have been presented at prestigious oncological conferences such as American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) and European Society of Medical Oncology (ESMO) and their respective tumour specific conferences. These trials subsequently have been published in journals including *NEJM* and *Lancet*.

Research activity over 2012-13 has been industrious. Research audits have favorably benchmarked results against world standards. These audits have been presented at both international (American Society of Clinical Oncology [ASCO], European Society for Medical Oncology [ESMO]) and local conferences including the Medical Oncology Group of Australia (MOGA) and Clinical Oncology Society of Australia (COSA). These include:

**Is there a role for chemotherapy in metastatic colorectal cancer patients with a poor performance status?** Eastern Health lead author HL Wong and co-authors Joseph McKendrick and Phillip Parente. 2013 ASCO GI, MOGA, COSA.

**Patterns of recurrence following surgical resection of Stage 1 – 3 Non-small cell lung cancer**

Eastern Health lead author HL Wong and co-authors Phillip Parente and Rachel Wong. 2013 International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer (IASLC).

**Brain metastasis following surgical resection Stage 1 – 3 Non-small cell lung cancer**

Eastern Health lead author B Zhang and co authors Phillip Parente, HL Wong and Rachel Wong. 2013 International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer (IASLC).

**Australian experience with Cabazitaxel in metastatic castrate resistant prostate cancer**

Eastern Health co-author Phillip Parente. 2013 ANZUP, MOGA.

**Docetaxel in very elderly men with castrate resistant metastatic prostate cancer**

Eastern Health lead author HL Wong and co-author Phillip Parente. 2013 Australian and New Zealand Urogenital and Prostate Cancer Trials (ANZUP).

**Multidisciplinary care in the management of gastroesophageal carcinoma**

Eastern Health lead author J Whittle and co-authors C Hart, F Leow, J Foo and Rachel Wong. 2013 MOGA, ESMO.

*The Eastern Health Oncology service's research activity will continue to allow Eastern Health oncology patients access to clinical trials and exposure to promising agents, in most instances before they are freely available on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.*

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## ACCESSING PROGRAM ACTIVITY REPORTS

Eastern Health is committed to building a culture of research and ensuring such research is embedded in everyday clinical practice. Eastern Health contributes to local, national and international research activity. This document forms part of the broader sixth annual *2013 Eastern Health Research Report* reflecting the high-calibre research, commitment and strength of research programs across Eastern Health. A hard copy of the complete *2013 Research Report* including program activity reports is available by contacting The Office of Research & Ethics on **9895 9551** or via download from [www.easternhealth.org.au](http://www.easternhealth.org.au)

*Readers note: Where projects are collaborative with our respective research partners, Eastern Health staff names are in bold.*

### Clinical program reports available include:

- Allied Health
- Cardiology
- Eastern Health Clinical School and Eastern Clinical Research Unit (ECRU)
- Eastern Clinical Research Unit – Translational Division (ECRU-TRD)
- Eastern Health Clinical School Research Division, Medical Student Programs
- Emergency services
- Endocrinology
- Gastroenterology and Hepatology
- Geriatric
- Haematology
- Integrated Renal and Obstetric services
- Intensive Care services
- Mental Health programs
- Neuroscience
- Nursing and Midwifery
- Oncology
- Palliative Care
- Pharmacy
- Respiratory and Sleep Medicine
- Rheumatology
- Surgical Research Group
- Turning Point