

Welcome to the December Issue of WIRF News



In these Newsletters, we aim to provide you with information on some of our new and ongoing research studies, along with facts about health care that you might find interesting. We also aim to introduce you to new researchers and their field of work.

In this edition, we have included stories written by patients or a family member, sharing their experiences and providing important perspectives of the work of our Research Foundation and the Hospital.

A high proportion of the activities of the Foundation relies on volunteers. The Board members are all volunteers and much of the success in our business ventures results from the wonderful generosity of the 70 women who provide their time and expertise to our cause. WIRF also benefits greatly from many enthusiastic members of the general community who provide support in so many ways. Some details can be found in this Newsletter, but further information can be accessed at www.wirf.com.au.

I hope you will enjoy reading a sample of the activities of the Foundation and the many people who contribute to its daily life.

Professor John Newnham, Executive Director

Gynaecological Cancer



stars

through the
looking glass...

Celebration of WIRF Stars

Each year the Women and Infants Research Foundation proudly hosts the Stars Events. These events are WIRF's opportunity to showcase the most recent research findings in the fields of reproduction, women's health and newborn medicine.

Held over two consecutive evenings, the Stars Events bring together our finest medical experts and our top emerging medical researchers. They present on various topics relating to women's and infants' health to an audience consisting of researchers, and medical and health professionals from hospitals and clinics throughout WA.

The Stars Event theme for 2011 focussed on Gynaecological Oncology and recent advances in prevention and cure. Our experts – Visiting Professor Andreas Obermair, Professor Yee Leung and Clinical Professor Ian Hammond presented and discussed controversies in surgical and post-surgical management of endometrial cancer, and the use of imaging techniques to diagnose and investigate cancers. Our keynote presentation focussed on what we'll be doing in 2015 and the use of surgery or less invasive options to treat endometrial cancers.

Our second event was the Rising Stars Symposium showcasing WA's top emerging medical researchers in women's and infants' health and revealing their latest discoveries in short, sharp research reviews.

Reports on all WIRF studies are included in the 2011 Annual Report (available hardcopy or online at www.wirf.com.au/reports).

Details of our speakers, presentations and sponsors for the Stars Events are available at www.wirf.com.au/events.

Gynaecological Cancer Research at WIRF

Earlier this year Professor Yee Leung joined the hospital staff as a clinical academic for the School of Women's and Infants' Health, The University of Western Australia. This was wonderful news for WIRF as we now have a dedicated Professor to drive forward our research and education in gynaecological oncology at King Edward Memorial Hospital. Professor Leung also holds the positions of Head of Department and Service for the Western Australian Gynaecological Cancer Service (WAGCS) and Lead Clinician for the Western Australian Cancer and Palliative Care Network.



Colin's Story

We thought this could never happen to us, but it did, and sadly it can happen to anyone. My name is Colin McCallum and I hope you take a little time to read my short story.

I lost my partner and soul mate of 27 years, Pauline Rankin, to Ovarian Cancer at the young age of 41. Pauline and I worked together for the last 24 years in construction and property renovations and were rarely apart. We loved each other's company 24hrs a day and were the best of friends. We were going about our lives as normal, hardworking everyday people, paying our bills, looking after our health as best we could, planning for the future until we were stopped in our tracks and told that Pauline had stage 4 ovarian cancer.

From that day on we fought a never ending battle to try and stop this disease. Pauline was given a full hysterectomy within 14 days; all of a sudden our lives were in complete turmoil. Pauline was scheduled to have chemotherapy but after the hysterectomy and having a lymph node removed from her neck, a fluid leak developed from the area where the lymph gland was removed.

She was admitted to Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. Unknown to us at this time, it was the beginning of a year of our lives that was going to be never ending hospital visits, chemotherapy, blood tests, scans and mental and physical suffering. But deep inside we still had a drive and determination that we could and would beat this disease together.

After the fluid leak was resolved and the drain tube removed from Pauline's neck, chemotherapy was scheduled and started. Pauline had beautiful blonde hair but decided to shave it off just after starting chemo. She tolerated it well and we remained positive. I remember looking at her sleeping in the chair while lines of toxic chemicals were being fed through tubes to try and kill these cancer cells. It was and still is soul destroying. The more I researched the facts about stage 4 ovarian cancer, the cell type and grade of the cancer Pauline had, it made me shudder. I knew what we were facing but had to remain positive. I ordered every conceivable health item from local and overseas suppliers, we went to naturopaths, Reiki, massage, hyperbaric chamber, and saunas. Anything that would benefit Pauline's body and try to help itself into healing.

Pauline fought so hard, she desperately wanted to live but finally her body could take no more as the cancer spread and she passed away at home in my arms on 6th November 2009.

The intention of telling our story is for women to be more aware that this disease is deadly if it is not caught early. There are signs and symptoms to be aware of. It is known as the silent killer and you have to be pro active if you do not feel right. Push your GP until you resolve the problem.

Ovarian cancer is the fifth leading cause of death in women. It is a cause that is so close to Colin's heart, his mission is to raise awareness of ovarian cancer and funding for research.

A lasting tribute to a remarkable man

The McCartney Gynaecological Cancer Research and Education Fund has been established to commemorate the life and work of Professor Tony McCartney who passed away on 22nd October 2011 after a brief cancer-related illness.

Tony was a pioneer in gynaecological cancer care and was the first fully trained subspecialist Gynaecologic Oncologist in Australia. In 1977 he founded the Western Australian Gynaecologic Cancer Service at King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women and this has expanded to include campuses at St John of God Hospital, Subiaco and Murdoch as well as Hollywood Private Hospital.

He led the way in advanced laparoscopic pelvic surgery and championed the development of laparoscopic hysterectomy in Australia and internationally. Tony was actively involved in the activities of the Women and Infants Research Foundation and this fund will ensure that his work will continue by supporting others in their research of gynaecological cancers. If you would like to contribute to his memory, please visit our website and select McCartney Gynaecological Cancer Research and Education Fund on our home page.

OVARIAN CANCER What to look out for:

- Abnormal pressure, fullness, swelling or bloating
- Pelvic discomfort or pain
- Urinary urgency
- Persistent indigestion gas or nausea
- Unexplained change in bowel habits such as constipation
- Loss of appetite or quickly feeling full
- Persistent lack of energy
- Low back pain
- Changes in menstruation
- Difficulty breathing

Ovarian Cancer is a silent killer because

- we do not have a screening test to detect early ovarian cancer
- the symptoms are non-specific. However PERSISTENT symptoms as listed above warrant further assessment by a family doctor, and appropriate referral as indicated.
- at the time of diagnosis, **three in four women will have cancer spread beyond the ovary.**



Fundraising Update

Charity Partner of Women's Triathlon - 19th February 2012

The Women's Triathlon has adopted WIRF as a partner charity for this year's event. You can show your support by becoming a WIRF Triathlete (as an individual or team) or by donating to a WIRF Triathlete - sign up to participate or donate at www.wirf.com.au.

School Fundraiser

WIRF was overwhelmed by the response of Goollelal Primary School, Kingsley to our Angel Breaths Campaign in September. The entire school took part in the fundraiser and premmie baby interactive display.

All students took part with girls dressing in baby pink and boys in blue for a gold coin donation and guessing the number of jelly babies in the jar. We would be delighted to hear from other schools who wish to support our Angel Breaths campaign and to learn about premmie babies.



WIRF's research priority is to prevent and reduce the dangers of preterm birth. We would like to ask you to support our Preterm Birth Prevention Appeal. Your donation will be directed towards researching why babies are born too early and how we can prevent this. Please make a donation and help us to create healthier generations.

Angel Breaths Campaign update

The Angel Breaths Campaign has been very successful in purchasing two life-saving Jet Ventilators and supporting research into healthcare for very premature babies.

We would now like to refocus our appeal to premature birth prevention. WIRF is recognised world-wide for our contribution to research in this area and we are asking for your support to fund more studies and help us discover how to prevent preterm birth.

Most parents have 40 weeks to prepare for the arrival of their new baby, however for those who experience premature labour their arrival is unexpected and far too early. Instead of feeling relief and happiness at the birth of their baby these feelings are replaced by fear and worry.

Everyone's experience of pregnancy and child birth is different. Thankfully for many, it is plain sailing with no complications but, for others, the journey takes a very different path. Eight percent of Australian babies are born prematurely, that is 2500 babies each year in Western Australia.

Most of the extreme premie babies who survive will need some form of life-long medical treatment and support.

Please donate using the slip below or give your gift online at www.wirf.com.au.

Yes! I would like to make a donation.

Full Name

Address

Suburb Postcode

Email

Telephone

- I would like more information on leaving a bequest to WIRF
- I would like to make a regular donation through direct debit (please contact me)
- Please remove me from your mailing list

I would like to donate \$

Mastercard Visa Other

Card Number

/ / /

Cardholder's Name

Expiry Date /

Signature

All donations over \$2 are tax deductible

Please return the completed donation slip to WIRF, Carson House, King Edward Memorial Hospital, 374 Bagot Road, Subiaco, 6008
Tel: 08 9340 1437 Fax: 08 9340 1642 Email: info@wirf.com.au Web: www.wirf.com.au ABN: 94 418 431 354

WIRF news



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Raine Study Celebration Award

On Sunday 6 November, more than 2,000 twenty one year old Western Australians were invited to Government House in Perth for a very special celebration.

It was twenty two years ago that 2,900 pregnant women were recruited at King Edward Memorial Hospital to take part in the Raine Study. This year, the "Raine Kids" turned 21. More than 2,200 kids are still actively involved in the Raine Study which is one of the most prestigious, largest and most successful studies of pregnancy, childhood and adolescence to be carried out anywhere in the world.

We are proud to announce that the winner of the award for the Most Distinguished Scientific Discovery Utilising the Raine Study went to Winthrop Professor John Newnham for his work demonstrating that repeated ultrasound scans in pregnancy are safe for mothers and their children. This discovery has impacted on every pregnant woman in the world who has had an ultrasound scan during pregnancy.

More information about the Raine Study can be found in WIRF's annual report and the study website www.rainestudy.org.au.

Arlaina's breaking the cycle Cycle Study Update

In our last issue we introduced the Cycle Study - a study aimed at preventing gestational diabetes through exercise.

Arlaina is one of our Study participants who kindly shares her account of how this Study has impacted on her health and pregnancy. Visit www.thecyclestudy.com.au for Arlaina's story.



Cycle Study trainers and van, funded by Telethon.

WHAT'S ON AT WIRF

Raine Celebration Award	1
Update on Cycle Study	1
Message from WIRF's Executive Director	2
Gynaecological Cancer	
Stars Events	2
Welcoming Professor Yee Leung	2
Colin's Story	3
In memorium - Professor Tony McCartney	3
Fundraising Update	4