



women & infants
research foundation

Media release

WA research talent shines at Stars Symposium

Monday, 28 November 2022

A chance to hear from some of Western Australia's leading researchers and clinicians has attracted health professionals, researchers and academics from across the state for the 2022 Stars and Rising Stars Symposium.

As WIRF's premier scientific event, the Stars Symposium showcased new and innovative home-grown research programs that are positively impacting key areas of health for infants, women and their pregnancies.

Keynote speaker and Professorial Fellow, Obstetrics and Gynaecology Royal Women's Hospital/Mercy, Professor Tu'uhevaha Kaitu'u-Lino headlined with her presentation canvassing a pioneering blood test at 36 weeks' gestation which may offer a simple option for universal screening of Fetal Growth Restriction which remains the leading cause of late-term stillbirth.

Preceding Prof Kaitu'u-Lino were the featured Stars presenters: Prof Megan Galbally, Dr Zoe Bradfield and Dr Gareth Baynam.

Prof Galbally outlined how early identification and multidisciplinary care were critical to ensuring optimal outcomes for women with eating disorders in pregnancy, whilst Dr Bradfield explored the power that research has to transform clinical care, workplace culture, service delivery and workforce sustainability into the future. Rounding out the Stars presentations, Dr Gareth Baynam canvassed the globally connected and leading initiatives right here in WA that are transforming health care.

The Symposium began with presentations by some of WA's top emerging medical researchers – Dr Abhijeet Rakshashbhuvankar, Dr Sean Carter, Dr Tsukasa Takahashi, and Dr Demelza Ireland. Their presentations covered a broad spectrum of research: chronic lung disease and the preterm infant; assessing fetal development with cell-free RNA; targeted anti-inflammatory therapies in pregnancy; and the critical role of undergraduate education in building research capacity and excellence in maternal and newborn health.

WIRF's Acting Chief Scientist, Professor Matt Kemp, explained that the foundation had designed a Symposium program that was accessible to the wider community while further educating researchers and medical practitioners, including nurses, midwives, GPs and specialists.

"We hold these symposia to highlight the range of research supported by the Foundation and provide a platform for high-impact WA researchers to share their important work with the community and their peers," Professor Kemp said.

"This year, the Foundation was delighted to have visiting Professor Tu'uhevaha Kaitu'u-Lino from the University of Melbourne present an update on diagnostics for preeclampsia and intrauterine growth restriction."

WIRF is grateful for the support of 2022 Stars and Rising Stars Symposium sponsors: Besins Healthcare (Gold Sponsor), Euroz Hartleys Foundation, Eastcourt Foundation (Silver Sponsors) and Pharmacy 777 (Bronze Sponsors).

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Background:

The Women and Infants Research Foundation

The Women & Infants Research Foundation is one of Australia's leading medical research institutes dedicated to improving the health of women and infants. We focus our research and programs across four principal areas: the prevention of preterm birth, gynaecological cancers, women's mental health, and the development of an Artificial Womb. Our research and programs have directly contributed to a number of improved clinical practices and health outcomes.