

Franklin Women

June 2015 Newsletter

EEK! We are halfway through 2015 – how did that happen? Even though it feels like it has gone by way too quickly, if you sit down and take stock of everything that has happened over the last 6 months you can see where the time has gone. It is good to remind ourselves of everything that has been achieved, as it is too easy to just focus on how much more there is to do!

For Franklin Women we need to celebrate the three fun, inspirational (and educational) events we have had this year. Last week our 'making the most of social media' event was a hit thanks to our amazing guest speaker Michelle Gallaher from [The Social Science](#) and our panel of researchers who so honestly spoke about their personal experiences. There are a lot more women in the health sciences on Twitter after this event! After the feedback on the night, we are thinking of holding a 'one-day workshop' on the more practical aspects of setting up and using Twitter as well as other platforms like LinkedIn, blogs and Facebook. Get [in touch](#) if you would be interested....

Stay warm in winter (our fave winter warmers at the end of this newsletter should help)!

Melina and the FW team



What happened this month

- Professor Ian Chubb's tenure as Australia's Chief Scientist concludes at the end of this year and the [call is out](#) for someone extraordinary to build on his work.
 - The 2015 [Queen's Birthday honours list](#) was announced, with science and medicine fields well represented amongst the winners – hoorah!
 - Applications for the annual [WiT \(Women in Technology\) Awards](#), close today! A great opportunity to celebrate women in life sciences research! Who can you nominate?
 - Legislation to create the Medical Research Future Fund, which was introduced into Parliament earlier this year, passed the House of Representatives and has now been [referred to the Senate](#).
 - Our June FW event, Making social media work for your career, was a huge success! Thank you to all the speakers and guests for attending. We loved seeing all the new career connections being made! Pics and resources will be up on our [website](#) soon.
 - FW Founder Melina Georgousakis spoke at a WiT [Life Sciences Breakfast](#) sharing her career journey in health research (including the creation of Franklin Women!).
-



FW Journal Club

This month's Journal Club contribution comes from Dr Holly Seale, Senior Lecturer at the School of Public Health and Community Medicine, University of New South Wales. Happy reading!

[Seale H, Chughtai AA, Kaur R, Crowe P, Phillipson L, Novytska Y, Travaglia J. Ask, speak up and be proactive: empowering patient infection control to prevent health care-acquired infections. American Journal of Infection Control 2015;43\(5\):447-53.](#)



What were the aims of this research? This pilot study aimed to examine the receptiveness of hospital patients towards a new empowerment tool aimed at increasing awareness and engagement of patients in preventing healthcare acquired infections (HCAI). Despite progress in patient safety and hospital care HCAI continue to develop in hospitalised patients. HCAI contribute an additional strain on healthcare systems by increasing patients' morbidity and mortality. In order to improve patient outcomes, it has long been suggested that patients need to be empowered to take an active role in their own healthcare.

What are the take home findings of your research?

Sixty surgical patients participated in the pilot study. At baseline, just over half were 'highly willing' to assist with infection control strategies. Participants were significantly more likely to be willing to ask a doctor or nurse a factual question than a challenging question. However, if patients received encouragement, their willingness to ask either type of question improved. Following discharge, 23/60 patients reported notifying a staff member about a health concern; however, only three asked their healthcare worker to wash their hands.

How does this research contribute to the field? Although the WHO and others have recommended that patients have a role in encouraging hand hygiene as a means of preventing infection, patient engagement remains an underused strategy. Our results suggest that patients would like to be more informed about HCAI and are willing to engage with staff to assist with the prevention of infections while in the hospital setting. Further work is going to need to be undertaken to ascertain the best strategies to promote patient/healthcare worker engagement and participation in infection control activities.

Who are your collaborators and how did your work relationship come about? This project brought together researchers from the University of New South Wales and the University of Wollongong, along with researchers from the Albion Centre and clinical staff from a major public hospital in Sydney. Just like what they say about falling in love with someone, if you go out searching for it, it doesn't always happen. This collaboration came about by chance and was made up of people with a common interest in infection control.

What new skills or projects are you currently working on? The major new project that I am about to embark on is motherhood! I have spent the first part of 2015 trying to wrap up research projects and submit journal papers so that I can head on maternity leave without too many things outstanding! But when the journal papers come back from review, I will need to juggle a newborn with submitting the revisions – always up for a challenge! Any tips from fellow Franklin Women members will be greatly appreciated!

Who is a woman that inspires you? A couple of years ago I had the opportunity to travel to Kenya and undertake some research in a small town in the Rift Valley. I had the opportunity to work with a very senior researcher from the University of Nairobi called Prof Elizabeth Ngugi who is well into her 80s and still leading a team of researchers. She joined us in the field and undertook workshops for members of the community around STI prevention. Even though we were sitting outside on the grass, with the noise of the camp around us, she had the group captivated and listening to her every word. I hope that when I reach her age, I am still research active and have the ability to talk to a crowd of strangers and obtain the same level of reverence that she was given.

What food have you eaten too much of in your life? I am surrounded by colleagues who drink coffee! Meetings are often organised around favourite coffee places either on campus or off. As a non-coffee drinker I find it very amusing that one drink can cause so much snobbery and problems. As a loyal chai latte drinker, I thought I was above all that. But then I found myself walking out of a coffee shop the other day empty handed because they only made chai the traditional way with loose-leaf tea. Oh no, I think I may have become one of those snobs that I always laughed about. 😊

Have you published recently? Firstly congratulations! Secondly drop us a line at hello@franklinwomen.com. We'd love to hear from you and are always on the lookout for journal club contributors for our newsletter.

An International Research Exchange



Two months ago, I boarded a plane for Strasbourg in France and embarked upon a three-month research exchange as part of my PhD studies. This has been an incredible opportunity – not just the chance to cultivate a serious cheese addiction (which has *absolutely* happened!) but also to develop new insight into my PhD project and the way that science is done on this side of the world.

My PhD project investigates the functional significance of Tumor Protein D52 (TPD52) in cancer. The genomic changes that occur within cancers are immensely complex. Uncovering which of these changes contribute to cancer development, as well as the pathways through which these altered genes function, is one of the most pressing needs in basic cancer research.

TPD52 is an oncogene that has been shown to be present at high levels (over-expressed) in cancers of many different types.

TPD52 was first discovered by my supervisor, A/Prof Jennifer Byrne, while undertaking her post-doctoral research in France. At around the same time, in a lab just down the hall, another gene called STARD3 was discovered. Interestingly, both genes have been shown to be critical for the survival of cancer cells from a particular breast cancer subtype known as HER2-positive. Recently, a paper was published suggesting that the TPD52 and STARD3 proteins may interact. And so our collaborative project was born!

I have come to the home of STARD3, where Dr Catherine Tomasetto and her team have unparalleled expertise in studying this protein. My main aim is to investigate the possible interaction between TPD52 and STARD3. But being here has yielded a number of unexpected benefits too. As the only person in the lab who studies TPD52, I have found myself fielding questions which I hadn't given any thought to in years. I am seeing my PhD project with fresh eyes. Blame it on the northern hemisphere, but I have definitely been

engaging in some ‘upside-down’ thinking and my understanding of this project will be all the better for it.

And, of course, I have been using my weekends to the fullest! It blows my mind that I am so close to other countries – I can drive to Germany in just a couple of minutes (*seriously!*) or be in Switzerland in just over an hour. Strasbourg itself is a gorgeous city – from the astonishing intricacy of the Gothic cathedral to the crooked half-timbered houses and flower-lined canals of the old town, I am constantly amazed by the place that I am temporarily calling home.

However, this experience has not been without its challenges. At times I have felt like a complete novice in the lab, with everything from the location of equipment to the arrangement of the computer keyboard being unfamiliar. It is a bit like trying to cook in someone else’s kitchen – I don’t know where any of the ingredients are and all the recipes are written in French! In fact, the language divide has been one of the greatest challenges of this experience, but also one of its biggest rewards. It has sometimes been difficult to make myself understood with my strange Australian accent but I’ve also learnt a stack of fascinating stuff. I mean, who knew that ‘DNA’ is called ‘ADN’ here?!

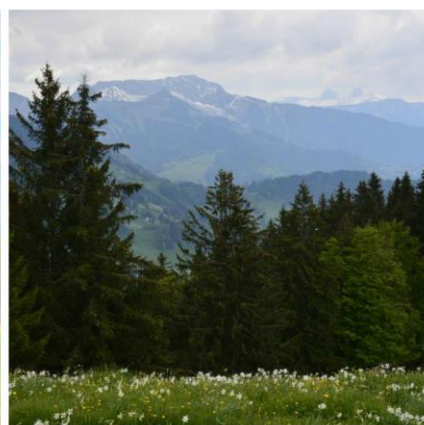
Overall, this has been a valuable experience. I was very fortunate to receive funding for this research through the University of Sydney and INSERM research mobility scheme. For more information on this scheme, please visit [their website](#).

Sarah Frost is a 3rd year PhD candidate at the University of Sydney and is completing her research at the Children’s Cancer Research Unit at the Kids Research Institute. In France, she is working at the Institut de Génétique et de Biologie Moléculaire et Cellulaire (IGBMC) under the supervision of Dr Catherine Tomasetto.

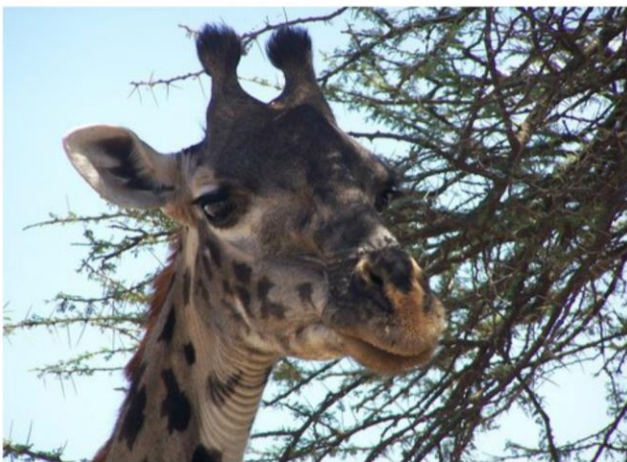
Travel

Whether it be for a conference, research work, visiting family or just a plain old holiday Franklin Women love to travel the world!

This month Franklin Women members Gemma Jacklyn, Sarah Frost, Meru Sheel, Donna Armstrong and Amy Vassallo have shared some of their favourite travelling happy snaps (prepare yourself for a strong feeling of wanderlust!)



Left to right: Gargoyle of Notre Dame Paris, Capitol Hill Washington, Mountains of Switzerland



Clockwise from top left: Nepalese monk, Black Forest Village, African giraffe

♥ We are loving right now...

Winter warmers!! As the temperature drops here are some links to help keep you warm:

- Colder weather is the perfect excuse to stay in and eat a big bowl of warming [soup](#)!
- If you must leave the house, here's a fashionista's [guide to layering clothes](#)
- Need some more winter woolies? Etsy store [Sisters+Stories](#) has a gorgeous range of hand knitted accessories
- Live in [Melbourne](#), [Canberra](#) or [Sydney](#)? Check out these lists of the city's best fireplaces (most also include wine)
- Here's our favourite winter [travel mug](#) for that essential warming cup of [tea](#)
- Still feeling cold? Here are some heart warming [animal pics](#)...

We want to include your contributions in our newsletter. If you have published your work recently or are doing (or know of) something that other women in our field would be interested in, drop us a hello@franklinwomen.com. Want to receive our newsletters directly to your in-box? [Subscribe here](#).