

Franklin Women

October 2015 Newsletter

It feels like our Mentoring Breakfast was just yesterday and now we are already on to our next event (gotta sneak one more in before the end of the year!). But before we get to it, I need to take a moment to acknowledge what a success the Mentoring Breakfast was – 1 awesome guest speaker, 11 women leaders in health research and 109 of you, all in the room learning from each other. It really was inspiring. So much so, we have reviewed evaluation survey responses and are planning for how we can build on it next year.

Our next event isn't quite as big but the topic is just as important. Writing is a big part of a researcher's job description. Surprisingly though, it is not something we are taught but rather a skill that is hopefully picked up along the way. As we are approaching grant writing season, we thought it was a good time to hold a writing workshop to help get your grant off to a winning start.... more details in this newsletter.

Happy reading (oh and Happy Halloween.....)!

Melina and the FW team



What happened this month

- A [Nobel Prize](#) was awarded to Youyou Tu from China for her discovery of artemisinin, the most effective known treatment for malaria.
 - The [Medical Research Future Fund](#) was officially established for the funding of health and medical research in Australia.
 - The [Westpac 100 Women of Influence](#) were awarded, including some truly inspiring female leaders like Franklin Women member [Theresa Jacques](#) – Hoorah!
 - The recipients of the [2015 Ramaciotti Awards for Biomedical Research](#) were announced, distributing almost \$1.5 million of funding!
 - [Open Access Week](#) was held in late October, a global event highlighting issues about open access to peer-reviewed work.
 - 23–25 October was [Health Hack](#), a weekend dedicated to collaboratively solving some of the problems medical researchers face in the analysis, presentation and communication of their data – know anyone who got their project hacked?
 - A fabulous new guidebook has been released aiming to [help female postdocs](#) (note – it is specific to the US but still has some useful points for us down-under).
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FW Journal Club

This month's Journal Club contribution comes from [Qingwei Luo](#), a PhD scholar from the University of Sydney based at Cancer Council NSW. This paper was also awarded a Research Publication Award 2015 from the School of Public Health. Congratulations Qingwei and happy reading!

[Luo Q, Xue QY, Smith DP, O'Connell DL. A population-based study of progression to metastatic prostate cancer in Australia. Cancer Epidemiology. 2015;39\(4\):617–22.](#)



What were the aims of this research? In this study we used population-based cancer registry data to describe the patterns of progression to metastatic disease in men resident in NSW who had an initial diagnosis of non-metastatic prostate cancer.

What are the top 3 take home findings of your research? 1. After a median follow-up of 6.8 years more than 1 in 5 men diagnosed with non-metastatic prostate cancer developed distant metastases. 2. The continuously increasing trends in metastatic disease progression each year up to 14 years of follow-up confirmed that distant metastasis can develop over the long term. 3. The risk of developing metastatic disease was significantly higher for

men living in inner regional or rural areas, and those living in more disadvantaged areas.

How does this research contribute to the field? The rate of progression to metastatic prostate cancer estimated in this statewide population-based study provides important and previously unavailable information on patient outcomes over an extended time period. The estimated overall risk of developing metastatic disease in the population should help to inform health services planning. Moreover, the disparities identified in the progression to metastatic disease based on accessibility to health care suggest that the development of future cancer care services could be better targeted to areas of need. The method we used may be applicable elsewhere and could help to increase the utilisation of data from other cancer registries.

Who are your collaborators and how did your work relationship come about? My collaborators are Prof Dianne O'Connell, Dr Xue Qin Yu and A/Prof David Smith. We are working together on multiple cancer research projects at the Cancer Council NSW and Prof Dianne O'Connell and Dr Xue Qin Yu are supervising the research for my PhD degree.

What is your current role and organisation and how long have you been there for? I started working in 2010 as a full-time Data Analyst in the Cancer Research Division at Cancer Council NSW. I enrolled in a PhD at the School of Public Health, University of Sydney in July 2011.

What new skills or projects are you currently working on? My PhD research project is investigating why a large number of prostate cancer patients had their stage of disease recorded as “unknown” to the NSW population-based cancer registry. I am developing and extending research methods to handle this incomplete stage data.

Who is a woman that inspires you? My mum is the woman that inspires me. She grew up in a small town in south China but moved to far north China after getting married. She kept studying hard and received her bachelor degree while raising a family of six children. Then she was working as a teacher for over 30 years and has influenced all her children and many students in great ways. She is an example showing that women can control their fate through determination and not giving up. She is proud of being a mother of six children, including two PhDs, two Master degrees and two Senior Engineers with bachelor degrees. I am hoping to be the third PhD in my family very soon.

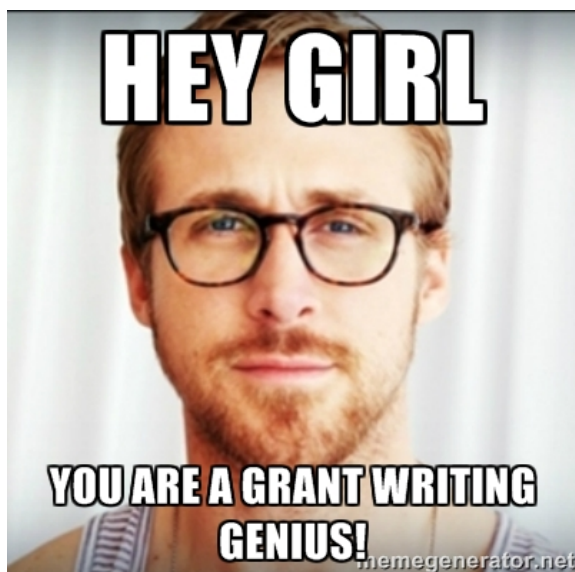
What food have you eaten too much of in your life? Probably ice-cream? It makes me happy and relaxed.

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 look out for journal club contributors for our newsletter. ☺



Franklin Women Event

Dr Malini Devadas is the founder of [MD Writing and Editing](#). She will be facilitating our upcoming workshop on writing effective funding proposals.



Writing is an invaluable skill for any career. For researchers it is especially important as it is the primary way you communicate your research findings to peers, the public and your funders. As many people will form an opinion of you based on the way you write, it's important to ensure that the quality of your written communication does justice to your research findings.

I have been editing scientific material for more than 10 years. Some of the common barriers I see to good quality writing include authors not understanding the difference between the writing and editing processes; not allowing enough time

for the document to be drafted and polished; and reusing their own content for multiple documents (grant, papers, etc) without thinking about the reader.

Here are some simple tips you can implement immediately to improve your writing:

- Set aside time each week for writing, even if it's only 15 minutes per day — a short burst of focused writing is much better than hours of fiddling.

- Start your writing project early enough so that you can put aside the draft for a week — this will allow you to look at the document again with ‘fresh eyes’.
- Find a colleague who writes well and ask them for feedback on your writing — they will be flattered that you asked!

My business, MD Writing and Editing, combines two of my passions (science and words) so I can help scientists improve their writing skills. I’m thrilled to be partnering with Franklin Women to provide a one-day workshop devoted to effective scientific writing.

Join Malini at our upcoming workshop on writing effective funding proposals, on Saturday 5 December. For more info and to register, visit our [website](#). Because of the interactive nature of this workshop, places are strictly limited.

My guide for healthy aging

We’re about to get stuck into that frantic time of the year, school is finishing up, grant applications are due, end of year celebrations are filling every weekend... So Franklin Women member Donna Armstrong shares some of her tips for getting another year older with grace and health on your side.



Maybe it was my recent birthday and dreading the big fat ‘0’ on the end of the next one. Perhaps it’s the fact that my ‘baby’ is about to finish high school. Or that I finally had to give up my beloved netball because my body can’t hack it anymore. Whatever triggered it, I suddenly realised recently – I’m middle-aged already! How and when did that happen?

Healthy aging has been one of my goals for a while. I saw my lovely Nan live to the ripe old age of 95 – but in pain and ill health for most of the 40 odd years I knew her. And I definitely don’t want to go through a similar thing. But old age seems such a long way off. A goal set 40 years into the future is just too easy to lose sight of. Being a healthy old lady doesn’t quite cut it as a reason

to get to the gym on those cold winter mornings. After all, staying in bed “now and then” won’t hurt. There’s plenty of time to make up for it, right? Wrong! If I want to be healthy and active at 95, I have to *stay* healthy and active – *from now on!*

At first this was a rather daunting prospect. Fancy having to keep going to the gym for another 45 years? Then I realised – all I have to do to *stay* healthy until I’m 95 is to *be* as healthy as I can be, *today*. Every day. (Or at least as many as possible – nobody’s perfect!). And I don’t just mean physically healthy. I’m aiming to keep my mental marbles intact too. So I came up with my healthy aging checklist to not only remind myself of what to do but also why I want to age healthily in the first place: F-A-M-I-L-Y.

Food – eat a balanced diet of fresh food, in [healthy portions](#) (but still including treats like chocolate and dessert – just not every day or in huge quantities).

Activity – do some kind of exercise on most days, like lifting weights in the gym, walking around the neighbourhood or taking up a new sport. Even [getting up](#) and moving regularly during the day is healthier than sitting for hours at a time.

Mindfulness – take a little time each day to [meditate](#) and practise being mindful in each moment.

Interaction – keep up [social activities](#) with family and friends, professional networks (like Franklin Women!), and giving back to the community.

Learning – you're never too old to learn something new! Learn a new skill every year, or sign up for [University of the Third Age](#). Or just keep doing crosswords, it all helps to keep the old grey matter ticking over.

Yoga – regular practice is great for [strength, flexibility and relaxation](#). I don't need to do the splits or stand on my head in the first week but if I can by the time I'm 95, that's a bonus!

Maybe today is the day you start your own healthy aging checklist!

Donna Armstrong is the Editing and Publications Officer at the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) with a fledgling freelance editing business on the side. She has a Bachelor of Applied Science (Biomed) and in a past life worked in clinical and research. She is also a mother of two boys (OK, young men), intrepid traveller and philosophy enthusiast.

We are loving right now...

Halloween!! Who doesn't love an excuse to dress up and over-indulge in sweets? Here are some of our favourite Halloween links:

- Completely forgot it was Halloween and need a costume for tonight? Here are some [last minute suggestions](#) (Cher from Clueless never gets old in our opinion!)
- How fun are these [ghost meringues](#) and [candy spiders](#)?
- Check out these great local Halloween fundraisers – [Trick or Treat for UNICEF](#) or [Scream for Halloween](#).
- Looking for a good scare? Here are the [top 13 scary movies](#) to watch this weekend.
- And here are some terrifyingly cute [Halloween costumes for pets](#) (vampire hedgehog is a personal favourite!)
- And finally, been a long week and need a pick-me-up? Just watch [Pumpkin Dance](#).

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 [line](#). Want to receive our newsletters directly to your in-box? [Subscribe here](#).