



RACP Foundation Research Awards

FINAL REPORT

Project / Program Title	To attend the 'Radiation Emergency Medicine' and 'Advanced Radiation Medicine' courses at the Radiation Emergency Assistance Centre/ Training Site, Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education, Tennessee USA in April/May 2019.	
Name	Dr Catherine Field	
Award Received	2019 AFOEM Education Development Grant	
Report Date	15/5/2021	
Funding Period	Start Date:	19/4/2019
	Finish Date:	8/5/2019

PROJECT SUMMARY

The purpose of my AFOEM Education Development Grant was to give me the opportunity to receive specialised medical training in radiation emergency medicine at an internationally renowned organisation, the Radiation Emergency Assistance Centre/Training Site in Oak Ridge, USA. Radiation emergency medicine is a unique branch of medicine, in which there are limited training opportunities in Australia. However in the course of my practice as an occupational and environmental physician, I recognised that it was an area in which there would be much benefit from me developing these specialised medical skills. I would be better able to assist employers and workers in the nuclear industry, as well as other doctors who may be involved in the care of radiation injuries and illnesses in Australia.

PROJECT AIMS / OBJECTIVES

My objectives were:

1. To gain best practice training in the medical management of radiation injuries and illnesses.
2. To utilise these skills to assist workers, employers and other physicians in Australia in the prevention and medical management of radiation injuries and illnesses.

These objectives were achieved by:

1. Attending the REAC/TS 'Radiation Emergency Medicine' and Advanced Radiation Medicine' training courses in Oak Ridge, Tennessee USA.
2. Subsequently providing consulting services to relevant organisations in Australia and assisting them in the further training of relevant staff, as well as assisting them in the review and development of best practice medical processes and procedures for the medical management of radiation illnesses and injuries, for an organisation in the nuclear industry.

SIGNIFICANCE AND OUTCOMES

Significance and outcomes for Occupational and Environmental Medicine:

1. To be an occupational physician in Australia with training and expertise in the medical management of radiation injuries and illnesses, who can provide specialised medical advice

to employers and workers in the nuclear industry.

2. To be an occupational physician in Australia who can assist employers and workers in the prevention of radiation injuries and illnesses.

3. To assist in the development of best practice processes and procedures for managing radiation injuries or illnesses, for relevant organisations in Australia.

Significance and outcome for medicine in general:

1. To be an occupational physician in Australia who can be a resource to provide specialised advice to other doctors, to assist them in the medical management of their patients with radiation injuries or illnesses.

PUBLICATIONS / PRESENTATIONS

Since completing these courses, I have assisted an organisation in the nuclear industry in Australia in facilitating further training of relevant staff in radiation medicine; and with developing up-to-date and best practice, tailored medical management processes and procedures for their emergency radiation injury and illness management.

I have contributed to a scientific paper presented at an international health physics conference about radiation injury. There may be an opportunity for me to write another scientific paper about radiation injury in the near future.

There may be opportunities for me to give a presentation about my experiences at the REAC/TS in Oak Ridge and my education grant to professional organisations and/or peers in the future. For example, at scientific meetings, CPD meetings and/or conferences.

As a result of attending the REAC/TS courses, I now also have valuable international peers and mentors in radiation medicine. I have already drawn upon these for professional advice about specific radiation medicine issues that have arisen in the course of my work as an occupational physician in Australia since. I expect that these networks will continue to be a valuable source of peer support and expertise for me in the future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and thank:

- The AFOEM Council and AFOEM Education Committee of the RACP, for giving me this opportunity via the award of the AFOEM Education Development Grant.
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- Dr Stephen Simmons, Principal and Director, IMMEX; and Mr Ralph Blake, Manager Work Health and Safety, ANSTO; for their encouragement and support of my application for this education development grant.
- My family, for allowing me to spend two weeks away from home to pursue this exciting opportunity.