



## RACP Foundation Research Awards

### FINAL REPORT

<b>Project / Program Title</b>	Participation at IANS 2019 European High Resolution Anoscopy Workshop	
<b>Name</b>	Dr Nicholas Comninos	
<b>Award Received</b>	2019 AChSHM Educational Study Grant	
<b>Report Date</b>	12 May 2021	
<b>Funding Period</b>	Start Date:	6 November 2019
	Finish Date:	10 November 2019

#### PROJECT SUMMARY

I received the AChSHM Educational Study Grant to participate in the 2019 European High Resolution Anoscopy Workshop, held in London UK in November 2019 by both the International Anal Neoplasia Society (IANS) and the British Association for Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH). Anal cancer, associated with Human Papillomavirus infection, is much more common among certain population groups including people living with HIV and other conditions that affect the immune system. Anoscopy is a procedure used to assess anal cancer and its precursors. Participating in this unique international workshop has helped me to develop specific skills in anogenital tract examination and special interests in the field of Human Papillomavirus associated cancer and pre-invasive disease. I am very grateful for the support that this Study Grant has afforded me.

#### PROJECT AIMS / OBJECTIVES

- To develop knowledge of the principles of anogenital tract examination including high resolution anoscopy (HRA)  
*Addressed by attending didactic lectures and seminars, interactive workshops and hands-on training at the 2019 IANS-BASHH HRA workshop*
- To develop skills in recognising significant anogenital tract disease  
*Addressed by attending the 2019 IANS-BASHH HRA workshop, participating in follow up continuing medical educational (CME) activities online and continuing my membership of /ANS and participation in /ANS educational events*
- To develop skills in specimen collection and biopsy  
*Addressed by attending interactive workshops and hands-on training at the 2019 IANS-BASHH HRA workshop and observing and participating in high resolution anoscopy clinics in 2019-2020 in Sydney*
- To develop skills and build experience in a procedure with a long learning curve  
*Addressed by attending didactic sessions, interactive workshops and hands-on training at the 2019 IANS-BASHH HRA workshop, observing and participating in high resolution*

*anoscopy clinics in 2019-2020 in Sydney and completing follow-up continuing medical educational activities as a member of IANS.*

- To work toward providing care (including HRA) to priority population groups (HRA) at high risk of anal cancer

*Addressed by networking and meeting leaders in this field during the 2019 IANS-BASHH HRA workshop, observing and participating in high resolution anoscopy clinics in 2019-2020 in Sydney and completing follow-up continuing medical educational activities as a member of IANS.*

- To help to address a workforce shortage (shortage of physicians trained in HRA)

*Addressed by networking and meeting leaders in this field during the 2019 IANS-BASHH HRA workshop and observing and participating in high resolution anoscopy clinics in 2019-2020 in Sydney, Australia.*

## **SIGNIFICANCE AND OUTCOMES**

### **Significance:**

- Anal cancer and pre-cancer disproportionately affects certain population groups (such as those living with HIV or those living with immunosuppression/immunodeficiency) and high resolution anoscopy (HRA) aids in the assessment and diagnosis of anal cancer and pre-cancer. As a result of this educational grant I have developed procedural examination skills for which there is a significant workforce shortage that provides care for vulnerable and/or priority population groups affected by anal cancer, HPV related anogenital tract cancer and its precursors.

### **Outcomes:**

- I have developed specific skills as a Sexual Health Physician in High Resolution Anoscopy
- I am now a member of IANS (International Anal Neoplasia Society)
- I have improved my confidence in working towards being able to provide this procedure to those at high risk of anal cancer and its precursors who are often vulnerable and/or priority population groups targeted by Sexual Health/HIV services
- In my field, I have educated, taught and instructed others on examination techniques involving colposcopy, anoscopy and lower genital tract biopsy (including perianal skin). Examples include a previous role (2019-2020) in High Resolution Anoscopy, a current role in Sexual Health Medicine where I have supervised Doctors and Nurse Practitioners in biopsy and a current role in colposcopy where I am supervising a trainee colposcopist.
- I have contributed to the broader medical care of those at risk of HPV related anogenital tract disease (due immunosuppression) in a specialist role in Anoscopy at an Anal Cancer and Pre-cancer Service (2019-2020)
- I have led and participated in an audit and quality improvement project in anoscopy and anogenital tract examination and presented the findings at a national conference (2020).

## **PUBLICATIONS / PRESENTATIONS**

Comminos NB, Seeds DJ, Roberts JM, Hillman RJ. Learning High Resolution Anoscopy: one trainee's baseline performance metrics in an Australian anal dysplasia and cancer service. Presented at the 2020 Australasian Sexual Health Conference.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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