The CTNZ Annual Scientific Meeting 2010
Thurs 5th August, Fisher and Paykel Education Centre, Auckland City Hospital

This year's Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) is rapidly approaching. The day will include reports on CTNZ's current and new studies, along with the annual open session for new concept discussion. We are also delighted to announce our guest speaker Dr Ron Jones for our educational session, speaking on “a clear conscience during an unfortunate experiment.”

As per previous years the meeting is free of charge to attend, but for catering purposes we request you register your attendance prior to Monday 2nd August with Kasturi Naicker via email: k.naicker@auckland.ac.nz.

CTNZ believe that this meeting provides a great opportunity for us all to get together and we hope to see many of you there! The open forum to discuss new trial ideas and novel concepts is already full and promises to be an exciting session of clinical and scientific interest.

CTNZ Clinical Trial Training Day - Friday 6th August
Cancer Clinical Trials in NZ: More than GCP!

A free training session for cancer centre staff. This day will focus primarily on two key components of trial conduct - informed consent and safety reporting from a patient centred historical and ethical point of view. There are a few places for registration left - if you would like to attend or for further information please email Stephanie Pollard at s.pollard@auckland.ac.nz.

Directors Message

CTNZ has been busy on many fronts recently, and we look forward to our upcoming ASM where we will report back on our activity and discuss new trial possibilities. In the last month we have made an oral submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry on “improving New Zealand’s environment to support innovation through clinical trials” and I think got a sympathetic reception. Following on from this we had a CTNZ advisory group meeting where we further discussed the inquiry and subsequently made a re-submission to consolidate our views for the select committee (for a summary of the re-submission please see page 4). The advisory group also covered other issues relevant to CTNZ (see meeting report page 2). I hope to see as many of you as possible at the CTNZ ASM.
The new CTNZ advisory group met for the first time on 26th June. The group comprises representatives from each of the 6 cancer centres in New Zealand, along with statistical, radiation oncology and lay person representation. Consumer representation is being sought. The board discussed the current strategy, organisation and funding of CTNZ, with a view to creating a new 5 year strategy. The meeting was extremely useful and resulted in a summary submission to the parliamentary inquiry into the clinical research environment in New Zealand (for further details please see page 4). CTNZ would like to sincerely thank all the members for their attendance, contributions and feedback.

CTNZ Advisory Group Meeting
26th June 2010, Villa Maria Vineyard

The 45th annual meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) was held in Chicago between 4-8th of June. Prof Findlay and Dr Deva attended the meeting. There were many impressive presentations which underlined the major advances we have made in the past few years in our understanding of cancer. Unfortunately many of the trials spurned from this research were disappointingly negative – emphasising that we must not only improve our current concepts of the biology of cancer, but we must also become smarter in our design of future clinical trials. Notable highlights of the conference included:

- Bevacizumab in advanced ovarian cancer. There was a significant improvement in progression free survival (PFS), however we still await overall survival (OS) data to mature.

- Ipilimumab (human monoclonal antibody that blocks T-cell inhibition and potentiates T-cell activity) significantly improves OS in patients previously treated for melanoma. This is the first randomised trial that has shown an OS survival advantage for melanoma for over 30 years.

- PF-1066 (crizotinib), an oral inhibitor of the ALK and MET/HGF pathways, showed activity in heavily pre-treated patients with non-small-cell lung cancer who harboured the EML4–ALK fusion gene.

- Maintenance rituximab improves PFS in patients with follicular lymphoma who are responding to first-line chemotherapy, according to findings from the PRIMA trial.


**CASA404A2105 - Liver Impairment Study**

There have been no new patients recruited to this phase I study over the last 3 months, despite over 10 patients being screened in Auckland alone. Novartis have just provided a protocol amendment extending some of the inclusion/exclusion criteria which will be submitted to ethics over the next month and hopefully aid recruitment.

**ReCharge**

A total of 63 patients have been enrolled. Six patients were recruited in July - the monthly target is to enrol 17 patients across the 7 centers so just 11 patients to go! Auckland is currently the highest recruiting centre with 23 patients, and Christchurch in second place with 16 patients.

**Razor**

Two patients recruited in June – July at Auckland. Total recruitment so far: 8 patients, with another expected to start before the end of the month. Palmerston North Start-up meeting held on 21st July and Christchurch and Bay of Plenty are in the process of opening. A protocol amendment is currently underway following new safety recommendations from Novartis regarding RAD001.

**SIRFLOX**

New Zealand is still doing incredibly well, with Dunedin, Christchurch and Auckland Hospitals being respectively the 3rd, 4th and 5th highest recruiting centers internationally. We now have a total of 32 patients recruited in NZ. The trial has recently been extended to allow recruitment for up to 60 patients. A protocol amendment is currently being submitted to ethics.

**SOLD**

One NZ patient was recruited for the June-July period. International recruitment continues to increase with 11 new Belgian sites joining the study, 6 patients have already been recruited from 5 of these sites. Total NZ recruitment = 45, International recruitment = 706.

---

**NZACRes Annual Clinical Conference**

“Collaboration - the key to success”

26-27 August, SkyCity Convention Centre, Auckland

The New Zealand Association of Clinical Research (NZACRes) 6th annual conference is being held in Auckland on 26th & 27th August. This years conference will be held at the SkyCity Convention Centre.

As with previous conferences, workshops will be held on day 1. This year 6 workshops are being offered, these are Clinical Research Nursing – Exploring Career and Development Pathways, Best Practices for Site Monitoring and Management, The Shoe Does Not Always Fit - A Primer On Alternative Trial Design, Budgeting and Contract Negotiation for Trial Success, Clinical Trials – An Overview of Design, Data Management & Analysis Aspects and Building Personal Resilience.

The opening speaker on day 2 is Dr. Paul Hutchison the MP and Chairman of Health Select Committee for Improving New Zealand’s Environment To Support Innovation Through Clinical Trials (for further details regarding the inquiry please see page 4). Other speakers on day 2 include: Dr. Sanjoy Paul, Director of the Queensland Clinical Trials & Biostatistics Centre and Dr Samar Issa, Clinical Director of Middlemore Tissue Bank plus many more.

Early bird registration is now available up to 9 Aug 2010.
Parliamentary Inquiry

Improving New Zealand’s environment to support innovation through clinical trials

This health select committee inquiry was initiated in February 2010 and written submissions closed on 16th April 2010. Submissions are available to view online at http://www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/PB/SC/Documents/Evidence/?Custom=00DBSCH_INQ_9752_1. Oral submissions were heard by the Committee around the Country in June. CTNZ Director, Professor Findlay made the opening submission at the Auckland meeting on Wed 23rd June and CTNZ Research Manager Stephanie Pollard was present for the day. Submissions were made from a good variety of Academia, Pharma, CRO’s Biotechs and patient groups. Key points that seemed to resonate with the Committee included improving the research culture at the DHB level, reducing duplication of ethical review, and considerations of post-trial drug access.

The inquiry was discussed at length by the CTNZ advisory group, and it was decided that a summary supplementary submission be made. The key points covered by this included:
- Clinical trials research should become a core component of the business of DHBS;
- A national policy on clinical trials infrastructure should be developed;
- The key performance indicator “percentage of patients on clinical trials” should be introduced;
- Mechanisms for funding public good clinical trials in New Zealand should be reviewed and improved;
- National standardised processes including single ethical and scientific reviews should be brought in; and
- The potential for cost savings via identification of distinct populations who will benefit from drugs is an important consideration in New Zealand.

CTNZ Staff Profile: Dr Sanjeev Deva

Dr Deva has been the latest addition to the CTNZ staff, joining as a part-time Research Fellow at the end of 2009. He is currently in his final year of Medical Oncology training at Auckland Hospital.

He is enjoying his foray into the research world, where he currently helps run the CTNZ initiated trials through Auckland Hospital and also conduct further departmental research projects. So enthused with research, he is hoping to enroll into PhD at the end of the year.

In his spare time he devotes himself to his indoor cricket team, coca-cola, travel and his beautiful daughter.

Meetings 2010 Calendar
Visit our website: www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz/sms/oncology