



CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN
SEVERE ASTHMA

Innovative solutions for severe asthma

Centre of Excellence in Severe Asthma Newsletter (Volume 2 – December 2016)

Welcome to the second Centre of Excellence in Severe Asthma newsletter. Our newsletters will provide updates on activities, personnel, upcoming events and new developments that are relevant to severe asthma.

Newsletter Vol. 1 (August 2016) is available online: [click here](#)

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**HAPPY
HOLIDAYS!**

Special Seminar: Thunderstorm Asthma

Asthma epidemics associated
with thunderstorm outflows

Guy B. Marks



A thunderstorm hit Melbourne during the afternoon of 21 November 2016, which lead to an acute spike in asthma symptoms for many people and the tragic loss of eight lives. On behalf of the Centre of Excellence in Severe Asthma we offer our sincere condolences to the families who lost loved ones.

We hosted a special live webinar on "Thunderstorm Asthma" by Prof. Guy Marks. The recorded seminar provides insight into what causes thunderstorm asthma and treatment and management strategies to improve patient outcomes. The recording is available [here](#).

Prof. Marks also published a call for a national approach to thunderstorm asthma in [The Conversation](#)

Upcoming Events (Save the Date):

01 February 2017 – Celeste Porsbjerg Webinar
25 March 2017 – TSANZ Conference Special Interest Group
Session + Post-Graduate Workshop (Canberra)

Webinar Series

We regularly host national and international experts for online seminars on topics related to severe asthma.



Next Webinar:

A/Prof. Celeste Porsbjerg (Bispebjerg Hospital & University of Copenhagen, Denmark) will present on “Non-Eosinophilic Asthma – Common But Poorly Understood” on **01 February 2017**. For more information and to register:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7554477592281766147>

Past webinars include:

Seminars are recorded and made available on our [past webinars](#) site.

- Prof. Peter Wark – Monoclonal Antibody Therapy and Severe Asthma
- Prof. Helen Reddel & A/Prof. Lorraine Smith – Living with Severe Asthma
- Dr. Krystelle Godbout – Occupational Asthma
- Prof. Ian Pavord - Biomarkers of Inhaled Corticosteroid Response in COPD

Events

The Centre of Excellence in Severe Asthma has hosted a number of events over the past year. More information on [past](#) and [upcoming](#) events can be found on our website.



Annual Research Meeting (Newcastle, 19th October 2016)

Our annual research meeting included presentations and updates from our trainees, a webinar by Prof. Helen Reddel on the “Living With Asthma Study” and a trainee workshop on “Getting Published” by Prof. Peter Gibson. We look forward to expanding this event in future years, and hope you will be able to come and join us.



Visiting Researcher: Dr. Robert Niven (University of Manchester) – March 2017

Dr. Niven leads one of 4 centres developing the Severe Asthma National Database Programme in the UK. His recent research has focused on new treatments and new technologies to assess and treat respiratory disease, dysfunctional breathing and psychological factors and their interaction with disease.

More details on seminars and an online webinar during Dr. Niven’s visit will be provided in future newsletters and on our [website](#).



Special Interest Group at TSANZ 2017 (25th March 2016, Canberra)

We will host a symposium at the upcoming [TSANZ Annual Scientific Meeting](#) titled “**Pathophysiology of Severe Asthma**”. It will feature presentations on biopsy, lung histology, animal models and cryobiopsy techniques, related to severe asthma. Information will be available soon on our [upcoming](#) events page.



Post-Graduate Workshop on Severe Asthma at TSANZ 2017 (25th March 2016, Canberra)

We are also excited to host a post-graduate workshop at the upcoming TSANZ conference. Our workshop entitled “**Severe Asthma: A Clinical Focus**” will provide practical insights into the assessment of severe asthma, targeted therapies, disease registries and case studies. More details will be available soon.

Meet Our Researchers

The Centre of Excellence funds PhD scholarship and post-doctoral fellowships to support career development in severe asthma research. Find out more [here](#)



Vanessa Clark is a behavioural researcher with an undergraduate degree in Psychology and PhD in Psychiatry. Vanessa has an interest in mental health and physical health research, in particular the interaction between mental health and chronic disease. In collaboration with other members of the CRE, Vanessa will pilot test a brief intervention targeting anxiety, depression and physical inactivity among at-risk patients with severe asthma. Outside of research she loves shopping, wine and cheese and is a part-time farmer.



Daniela Eassey completed her Bachelor of Pharmacy (Hons class 1) from the University of Sydney. She is a registered pharmacist and still currently works in a community pharmacy. Daniela's research focuses on looking at people's experiences of living with severe asthma. She is at the stage of recruiting participants and will be starting the interviews shortly. Recently, she attended a conference in Tenerife and presented her systematic review and this won best video presentation. You can view it [here](#).

Seed & Travel Grants



We are pleased to announce the successful recipients of the 2017 Seed Grant and Travel Grant Rounds. These grants showcase the range of research being conducted across the network. These small grants provide support to generate pilot data on topics relevant to severe asthma.

Seed Grants:

Marcus Ross Christensen - Gene expression profiling – a novel and efficient method for phenotyping severe asthma?

Vanessa Clark – Targeting Anxiety And Depression In Severe Asthma: A Pilot Randomised Controlled Trial

Michael Fricker – Macrophage Dysfunction In Severe Asthma

Vanessa McDonald – Patient Reported Outcome Measure In Severe Asthma (Promise): A New Tool That Measures Severe Asthma's Impact On Quality Of Life

Anne Vertigan - Voice And Upper Airway Symptoms In Asthma

Travel Grants:

Vanessa Clark – Multidimensional Assessment in Severe Asthma: A systematic review.

Laura Cordova Rivera – Physical Inactivity and Sedentary Behaviour in Severe Asthma: Prevalence and Associations

Daniela Eassey – "I like to know and make my own choices". Personal Experiences of Severe Asthma: A Review

Catherine Farrow – Heterogenous bronchoconstriction measured by Ventilation Single Photon Emission Computed Tomography / Computed Tomography

Michael Fricker – Flow cytometry-based profiling of immune cells in asthmatic sputum

Katrina Tonga - Blood neutrophils relate to lung volume and DLCO in older asthmatics with fixed airflow obstruction

More information on funded projects is available [here](#).

Severe Asthma News



Asthma Australia Symposium Series:

A report on the “**Severe Asthma – Uncovering the Reality**” study is now available – [click here for more information](#). The report is the product of research conducted by Dr. Juliet Foster, Prof. Helen Reddel, Dr. Michael Guo and Prof. Vanessa McDonald. The work was conducted in partnership with Asthma Australia.

This report provides valuable insight into the experience of Australians living with severe refractory asthma. Prof. Helen Reddel also recently presented this study at the Centre of Excellence in Severe Asthma Research Day. A recording of this seminar is available [here](#).



AUSTRALIAN
ASTHMA
HANDBOOK

Asthma Handbook Update (Version 1.2):

The updated version of the Australian Asthma Handbook has been launched. The Asthma Handbook is the national treatment guidelines for asthma, published at astmahandbook.org.au

Of particular relevance for severe asthma are evidence-based advice on the roles and uses of new add-on treatment options, including the monoclonal antibodies mepolizumab (anti-IL-5), omalizumab (anti-IgE).

Highlighted Publications

Summaries of publications relating to severe asthma and articles that have been presented in the severe asthma journal club can be found [here](#).

Recent Centre of Excellence Publications:

- [Severe Asthma: Current Management, Targeted Therapies and Future Directions – A Roundtable Report](#). Vanessa McDonald, Steven Maltby, Helen Reddel, Greg King, Peter Wark, Lorraine Smith, John Upham, Alan James, Guy Marks and Peter Gibson (*Respirology*)
- [Omalizumab Treatment Response in a Severe Allergic Asthma Population with Overlapping COPD](#). Steven Maltby, Heather Powell, Peter Gibson and Vanessa McDonald (*CHEST*)
- [Dendritic Cells in Human Lung Disease: Recent Advances](#). John Upham and Yang Xi (*CHEST*)
- [Phenotyping Asthma and COPD](#). Peter Gibson and Vanessa McDonald (*Barcelona Respiratory Network Reviews*)
- [How to Treat Severe Asthma: Part 1 Diagnosis](#). Steven Maltby, Peter Gibson, Joerg Mattes and Vanessa McDonald (*Australian Doctor*) Access is free for Australian Registered Practitioners
- [How to Treat Severe Asthma: Part 2 Management](#). Steven Maltby, Peter Gibson, Joerg Mattes and Vanessa McDonald (*Australian Doctor*) Access is free for Australian Registered Practitioners

Explore Our Website And Follow Us On Twitter!

Our website (<http://www.severeasthma.org.au>) is the best source of information on the Centre of Excellence in Severe Asthma and is regularly updated with news and upcoming events. If you would like to receive updates on events, useful resources and research please join our mailing list, at the bottom of our homepage and follow us on Twitter [@SevereAsthmaCRE](#).