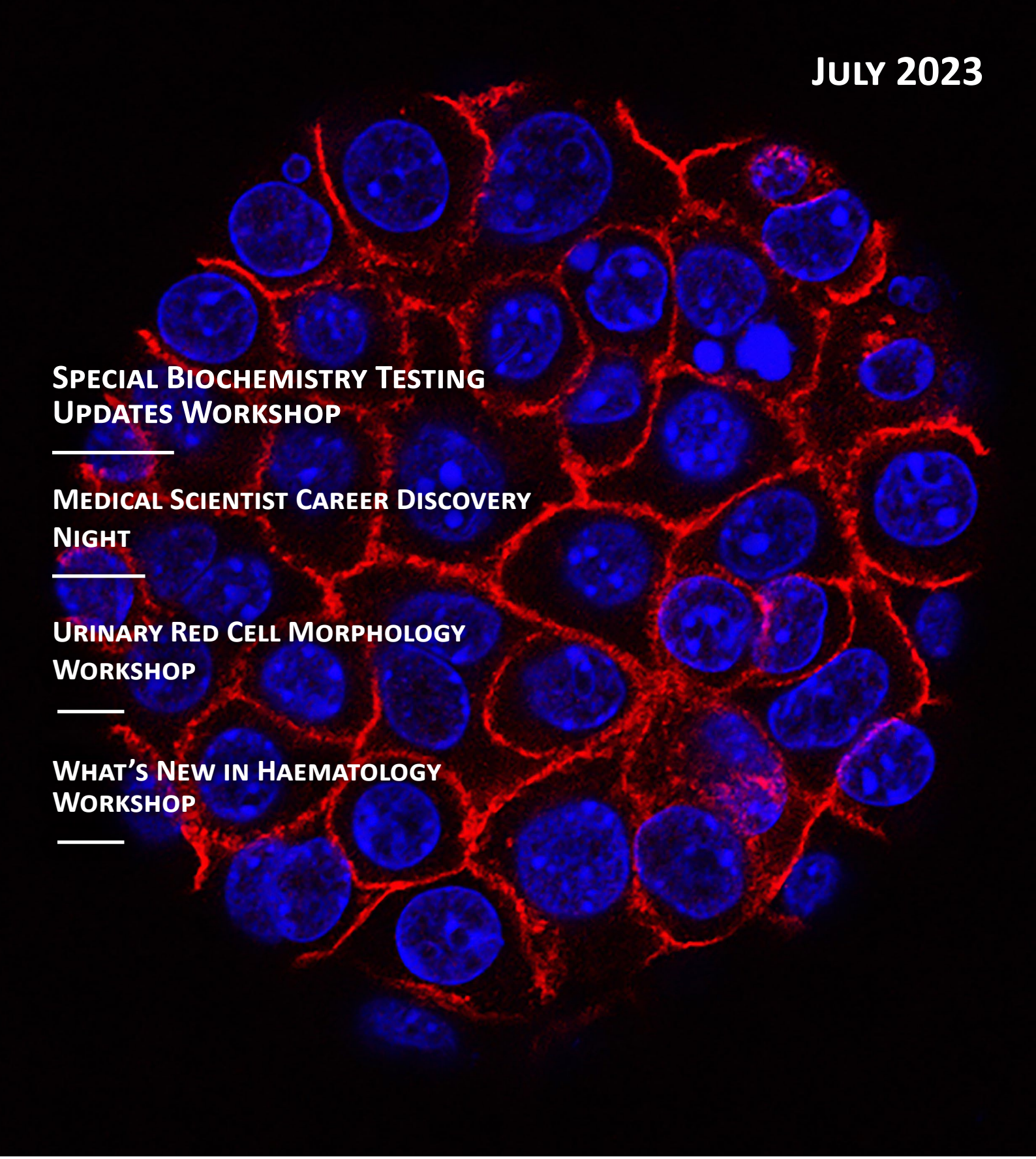
July 2023



Special Biochemistry Testing Updates Workshop

Medical Scientist Career Discovery Night

Urinary Red Cell Morphology Workshop

What's New in Haematology Workshop

BENCHPRESS

The official newsletter of The Australian Institute of Medical Scientists (Victoria Branch)

A.C.N 010 985 403

Inside this Edition

Got News to Share?

We would be delighted to share the good things you are doing in the scientific world.

Contact us at secretary.aims.vic@gmail.com or via Facebook (@AIMSVictorianBranch) to let us know.

The submission deadline for next issue of Benchpress is 15 December 2023.

A Note From the Chair

Welcome to this year's second edition of Benchpress. It's been a productive six months for the committee.

We hosted two biochemistry workshops, one virtually and the other in-person. Both were well received so we look forward to hosting more similar events in the future.

In May, the monthly haematology discussion group reconvened. In addition, an in person haematology workshop was held in May at Stago headquarters and similar to last year, received excellent feedback

We hosted a careers evening at RMIT for laboratory medicine students whereby demand for the event saw registrations booked out within minutes of the event being advertised.

A microbiology workshop was held in June at Peter MacCallum. There was very positive feedback from delegates so we will plan for more microbiology events to come.

Sadly we say goodbye to committee member Claire Gregory who joined us in 2019. We thank Claire for her tireless service as secretary on the committee and wish her the best in her future endeavours.

A reminder that our annual general meeting will be held on 15th August at Northern health so please join us for the event and to also celebrate award recipients.

Tina Pham
Chair
AIMS VIC Branch

Virtual Biochemistry Workshop

By Yuh-Ping Chong (Biochemistry Lecturer, RMIT University)

The AIMS (VIC branch) Virtual Biochemistry Workshop was held on 2nd of March 2023 with local and international experts presenting topics on current laboratory practice, analytical interferences, clinical case studies and point-of-care testing.

The workshop also incorporated a panel discussion, highlighting how professional qualifications (MAIMS and FAIMS) can help to advance career development.

The presentations were excellent and discussions full of insights. Nearly 70 people, including AIMS members, students and non-members, attended this free educational event.

We sincerely thank the speakers, and also AIMS and APACE for their support in clinical biochemistry education. A recording of the workshop is available on the AIMS Education site.

Here is a summary of the presentations.

Lot-to-lot verification

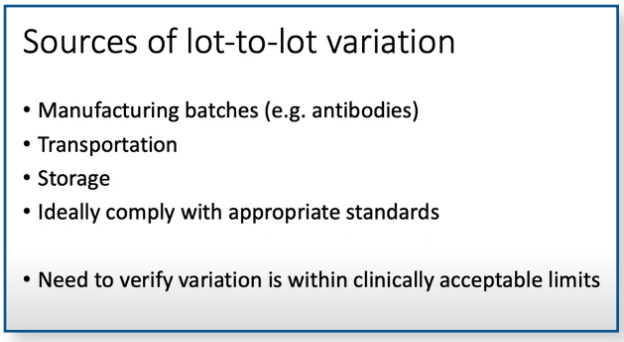
By Dr Tze Ping Loh (Director of Informatics and Research Director at Department of Laboratory Medicine, National University Hospital, Singapore)

Laboratory reagents are produced in batches that may affect their analytical property. Lot-to-lot verification is a laboratory exercise performed to ensure different production batches (”lots”) of reagents perform within acceptable limits defined by the laboratory. Lot-to-lot variation may incur a drift or shift, as well as increasing the rates of false positives/negatives.

Analysis of 25-dihydroxy vitamin D by mass spectrometry shows that even the basic reagent, e.g. methanol, can induce analytical variation. A new lot of methanol produced by a manufacturer with the same catalogue number but in different country, significantly suppressed the signal when compared to the previous lot.

Potential solutions to the problem include improving transparency of lot evaluation by the manufacturer. A networked laboratory approach may be implemented to increase the power of detection of variations in reagent lots. The use of commutable external quality assurance (EQA) materials may detect drift when comparing the lab data with peer-laboratories.

Patient-based monitoring using real patient data may detect shift, drift and analytical imprecision. An approach to improve reagent lot variability based on the Student t-test to detect long-term drifts in regression slopes and intercepts was discussed – Reference: Liu et. al. (2015) Clin Chem. 61(10):1292-8.



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Paraprotein Interference on Clinical Biochemistry Tests

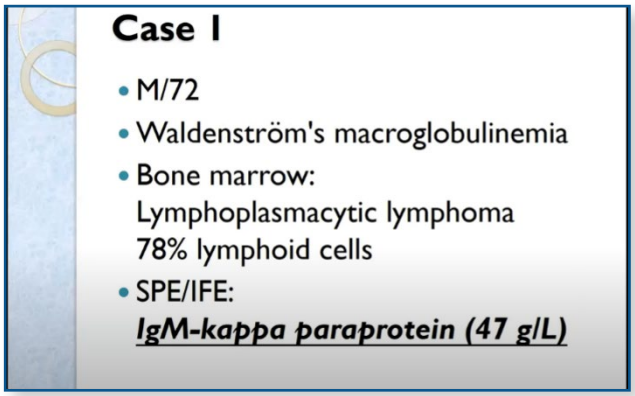
By Dr Edward Tong Hok-Fung (Associate Consultant, Department of Pathology, Princess Margaret Hospital, Hong Kong)

Paraproteins are monoclonal immunoglobulins secreted by an abnormally proliferated clone of plasma cells. They are most commonly present in monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance, myeloma, and Waldenström and macroglobulinemia.

Apart from the pathological significance, their presence, especially at higher concentrations, may cause interference on a wide variety of clinical biochemistry tests. Such interferences are not uncommon but may be easily missed - while some are obvious and predictable, others can be obscure and erratic.

Mechanisms of paraprotein interference can be classified into five types: hyperviscosity, electrolyte exclusion effect, hook effect, increased turbidity, and reactions with assay components.

A real-life case study on paraprotein interference was described. The patient (Case 1) had a high IgM-kappa. The specimen was too viscous and needed to be manually diluted so routine analysis can be performed.



It was recommended that the specimen to be transported at 37 degrees celcius to avoid cryo-precipitation or loss of paraprotein.

In summary, paraprotein interference may require a high index of suspicion to be noticed. Methods to tackle such interferences include serial dilutions, reaction curve monitoring, paraprotein removal/separation, and use of alternative methodology.

Troubleshooting Discrepant IgM Paraprotein

By Tiara Annissa (Senior Scientist, Melbourne Pathology)

In Melbourne Pathology, paraproteins are screened by serum protein electrophoresis (SPE) using the Sebia Capillarys3. Immunofixation is performed to determine and quantify the clonality of the paraprotein.

The IgM paraprotein may cause result discrepancy due to cryo-precipitation. Overnight incubation of specimens at 37˚C prior to SPE has shown to improve recovery of the paraprotein based on a protocol developed in the lab:

1. All IgM paraprotein specimens between 1–10 g/L are incubated at 37˚C for 2 hours and then re-analysed for SPE on Capillarys3.
2. Once complete, the IgM paraprotein measurement is compared to the initial roomtemperature measurement.
3. If there is no change in the IgM level, the report is released.
4. If the IgM level changes >2 g/L, the patient is added to the “watchlist”, the pathologists/senior scientists are notified, specimen recollection using the “cryoglobulin” procedure is recommended.

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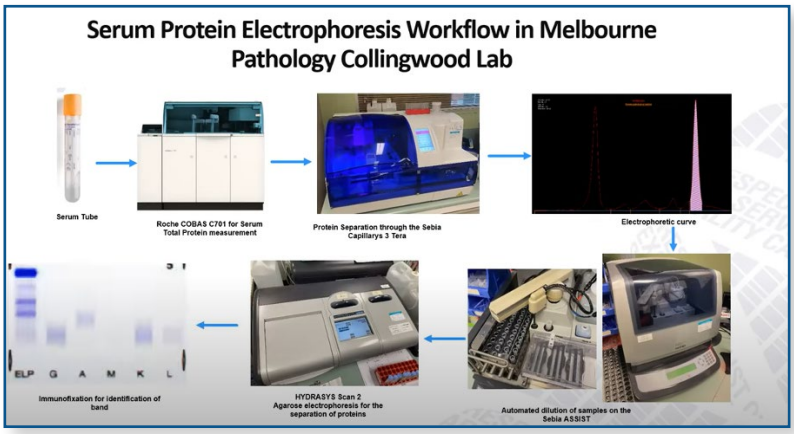
In addition, samples containing high concentrations of IgM paraprotein may be treated with β-mercaptoethanol (BME), a reducing agent that breaks the disulphide bonds of the pentameric IgM to its monomeric form.

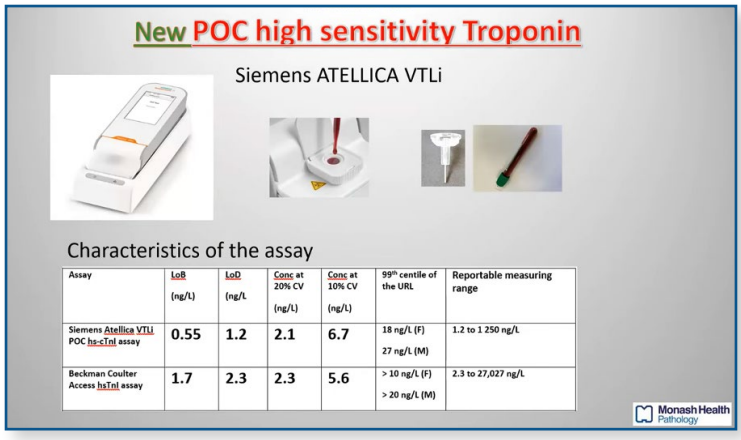


Point of Care Testing – From the Heart

By Lisa MacKay (Point of Care Co-ordinator, Monash Health Pathology, Monash Medical Centre)

The new Victorian Heart Hospital is the first dedicated cardiac hospital in Australia, and includes a full range of cardiac services replacing those at Monash Heart with excellence in cardiovascular care, research and education with an added focus on prevention and wellness.

Pathology consists of a 24-hour Stat laboratory for routine Biochemistry and Haematology, including Blood Banking. Point of Care Testing also plays a vital role in Pathology, servicing the Emergency Department, Intensive Care, Operating Theatres and Imaging. The Point of Care Instrumentation has been evaluated at Monash Medical Centre and includes Blood Gas analysers, i-STAT Alinity and Thromboelastography (Teg) devices. The evaluation criteria has been met with Quality, Accuracy, Precision and Fit for Purpose.



Assay	LoB (ng/L)	LoD (ng/L	Conc at 20% CV (ng/L)	Conc at 10% CV (ng/L)	99th centile of the URL	Reportable measuring range
Siemens Atellica VTLi POC hs-cTnI assay	0.55	1.2	2.1	6.7	18 ng/L (F) 27 ng/L (M)	1.2 to 1 250 ng/L
Beckman Coulter Access hsTnI assay	1.7	2.3	2.3	5.6	> 10 ng/L (F) > 20 ng/L (M)	2.3 to 27,027 ng/L

At the request of the Cardiac Emergency head, a new High Sensitive Troponin I method is being trialled to enable rapid Triage of incoming cardiac patients. The Point of Care team is responsible for Inventory Management of consumables, initial and ongoing Operator training, Quality Assurance, oversight of Quality Control and IT requirements. It is hoped the Victorian Heart Hospital will, in time, reduce the significant burden of heart disease in Victoria.

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Forum: Earning a Fellowship Qualification – what can it do for you?

Panelist: Prof. Denise Jackson, Tina Pham, A/Prof. Donna Rudd
Facilitator: Yuh-Ping Chong

The AIMS Fellowship is an attractive and highly competitive option to academic postgraduate degrees. The Fellowship is recognised by the Department of Health for meeting the requirements for supervision of category GX and GY laboratories.

Prof. Denise Jackson, A/Prof. Donna Rudd and Tina Pham were the discussion panellists. They provided useful guidance and answered some common questions related to the Professional Examinations:

- Who can sit the MAIMS and FAIMS Examinations?
- The requirements to pass the examinations
- MAIMS Exam versus FAIMS exam, and the syllabus
- How to approach the exams questions – analysis of sample question
- What impact does a Fellowship have on your career development
- Exam study/preparation tips

This session was informative. It clearly explained the expectations and advantages of obtaining an AIMS Professional Qualification. Hopefully, the session will inspire some of us in pursuing the MAIMS and FAIMS qualifications, which these are highly regarded in Laboratory Medicine both nationally and internationally.

AIMS has **2 types** of membership examinations for the professional levels of membership:

Membership (Multidisciplinary) Examination	**Membership Single Discipline Examinations**
The AIMS Membership (Multidisciplinary) Examination which has **7 sections** (Anatomical Pathology, Chemical Pathology, Genomic Pathology, Haematology, Immunopathology, Medical Microbiology and Transfusion Science).	The AIMS Single Discipline Membership Examination (**Australian members only**) is available in: Anatomical Pathology; Chemical Pathology; Haematology; Immunopathology; Medical Microbiology; Transfusion Science.
The AIMS Membership (Multidisciplinary) Examination is an online remote proctored exam held twice yearly, in March and September.	AIMS Single Discipline Membership Examinations are now an online remote proctored exam held twice yearly, in March and September.
Click here to download the Membership (Multidisciplinary) Examination Pack which includes a Study Guide **AIMS Membership Multidisciplinary Examination Pack**	Click here to download the Membership Single Discipline Examination Pack **AIMS Membership Single Discipline Examination Pack**

Urinary red cell morphology workshop

By Joshua Smith (Medical Scientist, Northern Pathology Victoria)

On Saturday the 3rd of June 2023, a captivating collaborative ASM and AIMS event on urine microscopy took place at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre lecture theatre in Parkville Melbourne.

The event held 94 attendees in person and provided comprehensive coverage of various aspects, including red cell morphology and examination of urine sediment.

Renowned speakers shared their expertise throughout the day, starting with Dr. Jeffrey Susilo from Sysmex Asia Pacific, who discussed the role of automation in investigating Haematuria and the advancements Sysmex aims to bring to this field.

Maureen Jacobson emphasised the importance of continued professional development through APACE accreditation during informative session.

We also had a passionate presentation by Dr. Kathy Paizis, a respected Renal Physician, offered insights into renal presentations from a clinician's perspective, highlighting the impact of routine laboratory test results on her work and patient care.

Attendees enjoyed a lively Morning Tea break which also included a networking game that brought participants together to match their name tags featuring pictures of organisms.

Retired principal scientist Dr. Peter Ward gave up his Saturday morning to enriched the minds of attendees further by sharing numerous examples of glomerular and non-glomerular red blood cells, focusing on assessing the red cell morphology.

The event concluded with medical scientist Patricia Szczurek from the Austin hospital, who explored various other elements found in urine, such as casts and crystals identification and significance.

A fun quiz covering the day's topics added an element of excitement before attendees gathered for a well-deserved lunch. The detailed workshop provided valuable insight while contributing to APACE points for participants. Looking forward to attending the next one.

What's new in Haematology Workshop

By Tina Pham (AIMS VIC Chair & Senior Scientist, St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne)

Pictures from the AIMS Haematology workshop.

AIMS Victorian Branch Haematology Workshop was held on the 20th May 2023. Fifty delegates convened at Stago headquarters to find out the latest advances in haematology.

Cathy Durkin kicked off the session by sharing the pro/cons of digital morphology and her experience using Cellavision. This was followed with Sofia Plymin's talk on the Er blood group and how the new system came to be. Alex Stephenson Brown concluded the session by giving delegates a preview of the new "sthemo" fully automated coagulation analyser with no fleas or cuvettes in sight.

After morning tea Nurdan Hepyukselen presented on validation of the Sebia Capillarys 2 and some interesting cases of HbD. Crystle Lee gave the audience insight into variant curation and its applications while Natalie Shorey showed off the new "qLabs®FIB" fibrinogen point of care system which was the size of a mobile phone.

After lunch Cathy O'Dwyer discussed the changes in the ISO 15189 impacting laboratories while Maureen Jacobsen spoke about continuing professional development and the APACE program. The final speaker of the day was Mufleha Ahmed who presented findings from her student project on peak systolic velocity and anti-K1 antibody titre during pregnancy to detect foetuses with severe anaemia, foetal hydrops, and the requirement of intrauterine transfusion.

A wonderful day of learning was had by all. A huge thank you to all the speakers who shared their expertise and Stago for providing morning tea and an outstanding venue for delegates to network.

Special Biochemistry Testing updates Workshop

By Pramod Subedi (Department of Biochemistry and Chemistry, La Trobe University)

A glimpse of the captivating session, where attendees actively participate, exchange ideas, and gain valuable insights from the speakers.

On May 3rd, 2023, the Victoria branch of the Australian Institute of Medical Scientists (AIMS) organised an engaging workshop focused on the latest updates in Special Biochemistry Testing. The workshop attracted a significant response, with a total of 40 attendees, including laboratory students and professionals from various diagnostic laboratories across Victoria. The organising committee, comprised of John Gabriel Abcede, Tina Pham, and Dr Pramod Subedi - joined forces to create this remarkable event.

Presentations and Sessions

The workshop featured four distinguished speakers, each sharing their expertise and insights on different topics. John Gabriel Abcede, commenced the workshop by presenting his research on the "Web-Based Clinical Decision Support Tool for Initial Laboratory Detection of Monoclonal Gammopathies." His presentation showcased the development of a user-friendly online tool that aids laboratory professionals in the initial detection of monoclonal gammopathies, providing them with a valuable resource. Following this, Dr Udara Senarathne delivered an informative presentation on "Serum Protein Electrophoresis - Interpretation and Common Pitfalls." Her session shed light on the interpretation of serum protein electrophoresis results, while also highlighting the common challenges faced in this area. Next, Kai Mun Hong captivated the audience with an engaging presentation on the "Overview of the Biochemical Genetics Laboratories." His session provided an in-depth understanding of the various aspects and advancements in biochemical genetics laboratories, offering attendees valuable insights into this rapidly evolving field. The workshop concluded with Dr Kay Weng Choy's presentation on "Copeptin." Dr Choy shared valuable information about copeptin and its relevance in clinical settings, enlightening the audience on this emerging biomarker.

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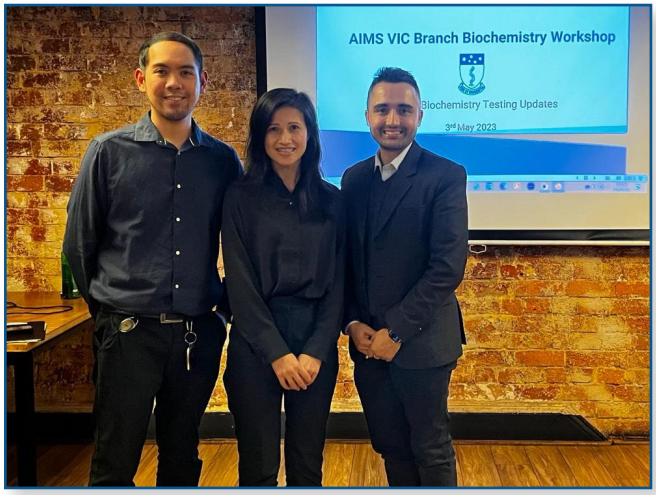

The organising committee (from left to right): John Gabriel Abcede, Medical Scientist at Northern Health; Tina Pham, Chair of AIMS VIC Branch; and Dr Pramod Subedi, Lecturer in Biochemistry at La Trobe University

Engaged attendees at the workshop, eager to learn and connect with experts in the field.

Following each session, an interactive question and answer segment provided attendees with the opportunity to seek clarification, share thoughts, and engage in meaningful discussions with the speakers. This exchange of knowledge and ideas fostered a dynamic and enriching learning environment.

Networking and Professional Development

At the end of the session, attendees had the chance to network with their peers and the speakers. This provided a valuable opportunity for connections to be made and discussions to take place, further enhancing the learning experience. Additionally, Maureen Jacobsen, the Chair of AIMS – APACE (registered trademark of AIMS), provided information about the APACE points, emphasising the value of continuous professional development. Attendees were awarded a certificate and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points, recognising the educational significance and practical applicability of the workshop.

The workshop organised by the Victoria branch of AIMS proved to be an invaluable platform for laboratory students and professionals to stay updated on the latest developments in Special Biochemistry Testing. The dedication and expertise of the organising committee, along with the insightful presentations by the speakers, contributed to the resounding success of this event. Attendees gained valuable knowledge, engaged in meaningful discussions, and established connections, all of which will contribute to their professional growth in the field of biochemistry testing.

Presenters at the workshop: John Gabriel Abcede, Dr Udara Senarathne, Kai Mun Hong, and Dr Kay Weng Choy (L-R)

Medical Scientist Career Discovery Night

By Xueting Hong (Student, RMIT University)

On the 1st June, the Medical Scientist Discovery Night was held by AIMS Victoria branch and RMIT University at the RMIT Bundoora West campus. Former RMIT students generously shared their experiences and showcased the possibilities and opportunities in career pathways for medical scientists in the industry.

The night began with casual chitchat. Industry speakers, teaching staff and students exchanged pleasantries while enjoying delicious food and drinks in the cafeteria. The professors and lecturers were excited to welcome their old students and classmates. Students were eager to learn more about the professional industry and were inspired to see what could be achieved with hard work.

Prof. Denise Jackson, our beloved AIMS president and all-time programme manager, delivered a brief prologue for the experience-sharing session and challenged the speakers to five-minute talks. Every speaker then introduced him/herself, recounted their unique career pathway and gave personal advice to fellow students.

- The first speaker, Niki Lee shared his experience in haematology and his admiration for technological advances over the years.
- Colin Pham, spoke about the molecular microbiology revolution brought about by MALDI-TOF in mid-2000s that saw him devote his career to this new area.
- Gary Liu, still nervous about the time limit, recalled the difficulties he faced as a normal student in biochemistry, which struck a chord with the audience.
- Teresa Abajo spoke about her career growth in microbiology from graduate to senior scientist and her effort to maintain a work-life balance.
- Trung Nguyen described his career progression in anatomical pathology and how this old discipline reinvigorated in the everchanging cancer study.

The following speakers expanded the scope beyond traditional laboratory:

- James Pistemalis and Steve Valentine deviated from the clinical pathway and stepped into the commercial world. They revealed how their work was similar to, yet, fundamentally different from the clinical setting and provided a fresh view of common equipment and supplies.
- Jimmy Ly presented his work on the laboratory information systems and enlightened the students with new potential in pathology IT.
- Patricia Szczurek, who commenced her new role as a quality officer, described a complementary and equally crucial aspect of laboratory work.
- Diep Nguyen talked about her experience in

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point-of-care testing, which demanded more consideration about patient compliance and other factors.

- Ryan Bolger did not try to conceal his enthusiasm in pre-analytical troubleshooting and told many anecdotes about his work, which evoked much interest in this field among the students.
- Finally, Tina Pham shared her career transition from haematology to cellular therapy and helpful tips for keeping pace with numerous advances in the field.

All speakers emphasised the importance of continual education, is one key quality sought when employing future medical scientists and AIMS is well placed to provide a variety of continuous learning following graduation from university.

The discovery night was a successful teamwork effort. It was thrilling to witness how a simple student survey in January highlighting the need for a career event led to a collaboration in June, which received rave reviews from all attendants. Many thanks to all speakers for their precious experience and advice, and to AIMS VIC committee and RMIT university for organising this event.

A Day in the Life of an AP Scientist: Ujenia Renganathan-Josan

What can you tell our readers about your current role as an Anatomical Pathology scientist?

As an Anatomical Pathology (AP) Medical Scientist, my current role comprises of working in both Histology and Cytology.

I predominately work in Histology which is where we process tissue samples for diagnosis. Routinely this includes embedding, special stains, microtomy, Immunohistochemistry (IHC), cut-up and cytology preparation.

All these processes are required to produce a slide which is then looked at by the pathologist. I specialise in non-complex cut-up which is when a tissue sample is cut in a specific way, inked, and then placed into a cassette for processing.

Can you describe your typical work day?

A typical work day varies from day to day, as a scientist I am rostered on a specific task. A day can include being rostered on for non-complex cut-up which is a solo shift.

At times I may need to complete tasks other than my rostered task such as attending a renal ward. Renal procedures consist of going to theatre collecting the fresh sample during surgery and checking under the microscope to see if it has an adequate number of glomeruli. Once this is determined further testing is commenced.

Working on multiple benches means I am rotated through all duties but also need to be flexible because at any time of day I can be asked to cut a fresh specimen for Direct Immunofluorescence or attend the mortuary etc.

What would you say are the highlights of your day?

The highlights of a typical work day is when I am able to meet deadlines especially when we are short staffed.

There are times where we'd have to complete more tasks than our rostered duties. I take this on board and try to organise my time accordingly.

Once all tasks are completed, especially always thinking about putting the patients' needs first, I feel satisfied.

What are some of the challenges in your role?

Some challenges that I face on a busy day is the need to multitask when we are short staffed. It can be difficult to complete multiple tasks by a certain deadline.

During times like these, I try to ask for assistance and prioritise what needs to be completed first.

What are your interests outside of work?

My interests outside of work include art and exercising. In my spare time I like to sketch portraits. I also enjoy the outdoors and going on hikes for exercise.

An overseas placement at PICO Medical Laboratory

By Enoch Woo (Student, RMIT University)

A photo taken on my last day of the internship with Alan Wong (man on the left) and Dominic Yuen (man on the right).

During the summer holiday, I did a 2-month placement and worked as a laboratory assistant at PICO Medical Laboratory, a start-up private clinical laboratory located in Hong Kong. It was a rather small laboratory, but I have certainly learned a lot.

According to the regulations in Hong Kong, non-registered and non-licensed personnel is prohibited from releasing patients' test results. However, I am allowed to apply pre-analytical measures such as centrifuging, pipetting, incubation, dilution and blood smear preparation, in which I have gained valuable experience with and consolidated my laboratory techniques.

I was also responsible for performing and monitoring daily maintenance, QCs and calibrations on various analysers including VITROS5600 (Johnson & Johnson), which is a biochemical and immunological analyser, and Sysmex CBC, which is a haematological analyser for FBE.

Although I was not allowed to report any observations on the official medical report, I was given the chance to practice morphology on a wide range of patients.

On top of that, I have learned to use Laboratory Information System (LIS), including the registration of the patients and report preparation. Report preparation is a stage where I have learned the most in terms of medical knowledge. PICO Medical Laboratory receives referrals from different fields of specialists including general practitioners, oncologists, reproductive endocrinologists and physicians. Therefore, there are many different medical conditions to learn and study from.

Apart from the regular "lab stuff", I was also responsible for answering any phone calls from and communicate with nurses, doctors and clinical scientists to ensure smooth and accurate laboratory testing and results. This has strengthened my communication and interpersonal skills and was certainly a good experience.

However, the most invaluable experience I had during my time in PICO was shadowing a phlebotomist and assisting on blood taking. By meeting actual patients, not only have I reinforced my interpersonal skills, but the sense of responsibility and work ethics as a healthcare worker have never been stronger.

By interacting with these patients, they became much more than a name on the request forms or a bunch of data; they are human beings in which their health lies in our hands. This is the most important lesson I have learned out of all the other techniques and skills.

Phlebotomy cart in an oncology clinic.

Group photo of PICO Medical Laboratory and Gowell Medical Centre.

Obituary: Helen Bardsley

(1952 – 2022)

By Glenda Mann and Suzanne Broom Emery

Helen started her career as a trainee Medical Scientist in 1970 at the Preston and Northcote Community Hospital (PANCH), working full time and studying part time by attending night classes at RMIT. She developed a keen interest in immunohaematology and in 1974 moved to the Serology Reference Laboratory (Red Cross), which was then located in Flinders Street Melbourne. This work included conducting Queen Victoria Hospital Antenatal testing as well as other reference work.

She completed her Diploma of Medical Laboratory Technology (MLT) in 1976 with a distinction in Haematology. She was thrilled to be offered a place to complete a Bachelor Applied Science in Medical Technology at RMIT in 1978, and obtained a credit in immunohaematology with the completion of her degree in 1979. She had fond memories of her lecturers and teachers and fellow students during these courses such as Bob Cross, Cliff Frances, John Robert, Alan Stubbs and Bette Wilson.

In 1977, she then worked in Private Pathology until her first child Adrian was born in July 1982.

In 1983, she commenced working as a part-time demonstrator in Haematology and Blood Bank at RMIT where she worked on and off for 10 years whilst caring for a young family. Like many women in this career, adaptability and flexibility whilst managing family duties were paramount. Helen was passionate about education and really loved to teach. During her career she was known to ask the question “what can we learn from this? Obviously keen to learn herself as well as teach or mentor others.

In 1984 she also worked at the Mercy hospital (East Melbourne) doing evening shifts. She left in 1985 and Joanne was born later in Oct 1985.

In 1992, she commenced working at Eastern Health and worked there for 12 years in many sections including haematology, coagulation/complex haemostasis, blood bank with some biochemistry and cytology thrown in for good measure.

In 2002, she had an opportunity to take up a part time position at the Royal Melbourne Hospital. She gained valuable experience working in the Transfusion department of this major trauma hospital.

In 2004, she commenced working at Austin Health in the haematology, coagulation and transfusion departments, and she commenced in a part-time role that soon went full time. Austin Health provides pathology services to a diverse and complex range of patients within Austin Health and to the Mercy Hospital for Women. Over her career she developed a passion for obstetric and paediatric pathology and loved neonatal case studies. She had a great rapport with the Austin doctors and pathologists.

Helen retired in October 2018 due to ill health.

However, she was able to become a blood bank demonstrator at RMIT for transfusion majors in 2019-2020. Ralph Green shares that she was an inspiration to all on her knowledge of investigating any blood group or antibody anomalies.

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Denise Jackson remembers that Helen was an excellent blood bank demonstrator at RMIT University. The students and staff benefited from her knowledge and experience. Helen gave her some wonderful case studies to use in blood bank teaching.

It was while Helen was working at Box Hill Hospital that she nominated for a position as a committee member with VIDG (Victorian Immunohaematology Discussion Group). As a committee member, she endeavoured to promote, encourage and foster continuing education in areas of Immunohaematology by assisting to provide educational meetings to medical scientists across Victoria.

Helen was also on the NICE (National Immunohaematology Continuing Education) committee, helping to organise the NICE Blood Bank conferences all around Australia. Not only did we appreciate her stellar organisational and treasurer skills, but this is where we saw her passion for dressing up for the theme nights and searching for the perfect DJ.

She LOVED dancing. It was such a pity she couldn't attend the latest NICE in Sydney after all her hard work. However even after entering the Olivia Newton John hospice late in 2022, she was very keen and able to share all the workings with others and that helped save the day.

From a work perspective she was a skilled practitioner and many have shared that they can still hear Helen's voice and little mantras:

"Follow the method, document everything, cover your butt."

"We are a team – so ask for help when needed."

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And when, for example, a massive transfusion or challenging time was over – "what could we have done better?" And always a "WELL DONE" and "THANK YOU to all".

And when doing morphology – look at all 3 cell lines carefully, be surprised by the unexpected, and give a differential diagnosis. This philosophy seemed to spill over to her personal interactions too. Find out the facts, and don't jump to conclusions, or judge harshly until you know the full story. She always had a listening ear and was a wise counsel.

Many have described her as a wonderful Mentor, a "Lioness" for justice in the workplace and a union member advocate – even when at a detriment to herself.

Helen's enthusiasm and joy for life were also exemplified in some of her other interests.

She was a devoted mother to Adrian and Joanne, and a committed Essendon supporter. She enjoyed cooking and even had Italian cooking classes at her house. Her speciality was cooking risotto.

Helen was very social and LOVED to dance. She thoroughly enjoyed theme dressing up occasions. Helen enjoyed many walking holidays, she loved to swim and going to the Pancake parlour. She also adored the family dogs.

Helen will be greatly missed, especially as a massive contributor in the Blood Bank world.

Awards (selection of)

Helen received a number of awards relating to presentations that she gave at meetings and conferences:

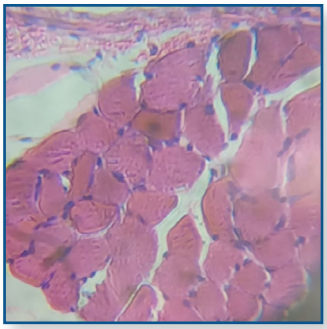
- 2011 – NICE New Zealand 'Best overall presentation' for Factor V111 Inhibitor – use of Novoseven
- 2012 Helen and Gaby Roche shared a Peter Thurlow award at the Austin Hospital
- 2013 – AIMS Cliff Francis award for her work on the topic of Transfusion in HELLP. (Haemolysis, Elevated Liver enzymes and Low Platelets syndrome). This award was for a Victorian AIMS member who had recently written a publication or presented a paper of significant merit in the discipline of haematology at a State, National or International meeting.
- 2014 – NICE Australia, Albury NSW 'Best overall presentation' for Twin to Twin transfusion syndrome
- 2016 – VIDG – NICE Australia, Canberra ACT 'Marilyn Garnham award' for Exchange Transfusion in neonates.

[Answers on page 20]

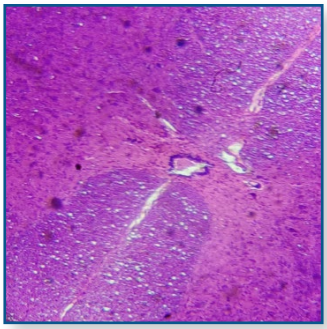
TEST YOURSELF

Name the organs these cells originated from:

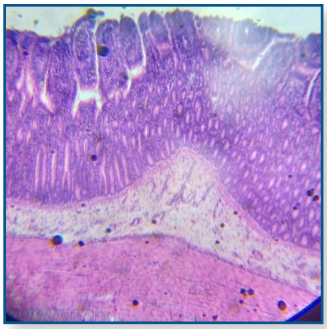
A)



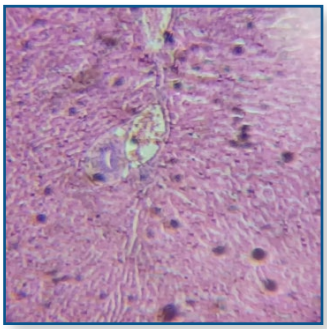
B)



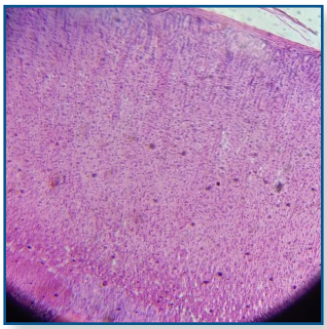
C)



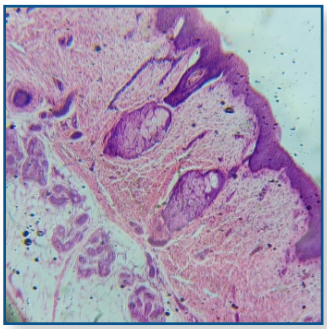
D)



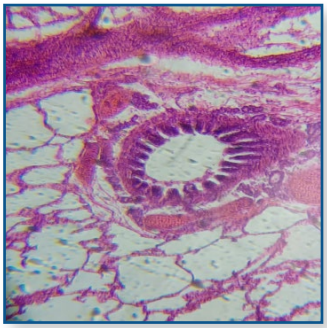
E)



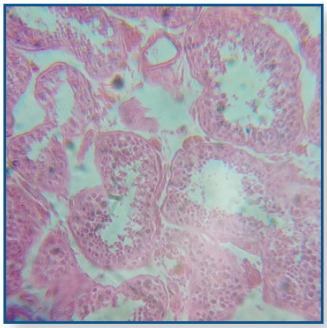
F)



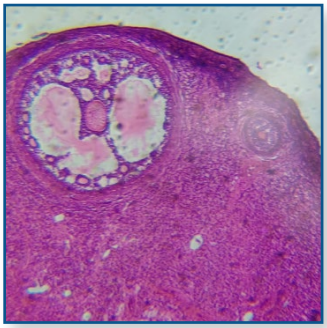
G)



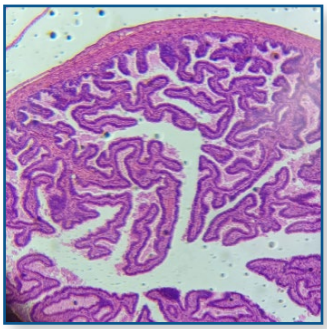
H)



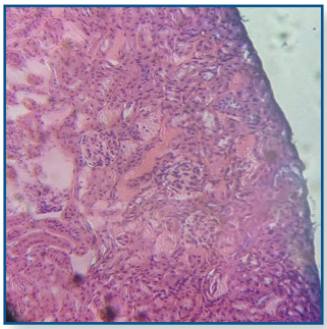
I)



J)



K)



All images by Enoch Woo.

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JOHN ABCEDE, CMLS, MAIMS
MEDICAL SCIENTIST
NORTHERN HEALTH

Your Victorian Branch Committee

Tina Pham
Chair & Benchpress Editor
tina.pham@svha.org.au

Patricia Szczurek
Vice-Chair
patricia.szczurek@austin.org.au

Joseph Rigano
Treasurer
j.rigano@alfred.org.au

Claire Gregory
Secretary
claire.gregory@svha.org.au

Niki Lee
Member
niki.lee@nh.org.au

Gurbaksh Singh
Member
gurbaksh.kanda@easternhealth.org.au

Yuh-Ping Chong
Member
yuh.ping.chong@rmit.edu.au

John Abcede
Member
john.abcede@nh.org.au

Enoch Woo
Student Member
s3924850@student.rmit.edu.au

Isabelle Gemmell
Student Member
s3844824@student.rmit.edu.au

Xueting Hong
Student Member
s3958870@student.rmit.edu.au

Answers to quiz on page 18:
A) Skeletal muscle
B) Spinal cord
C) Duodenum
D) Liver
E) Adrenal gland
F) Thick skin
G) Lung
H) Testicle
I) Ovary
J) Fallopian tube
K) Renal cortex

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