

MEDIA RELEASE - MEDICAL MEDIA

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### **ANZUP and The George Institute join forces to shed light on prostate cancer treatments**

The Australian and New Zealand Urogenital and Prostate Cancer Trials Group (ANZUP) and The George Institute for Global Health have announced a new collaboration to improve outcomes in genitourinary cancers, with an initial focus on predicting which patients will benefit from radiation therapy after surgery for prostate cancer.

The first project for the partnership is the DIPPER trial (ANZUP 2002). This phase II study is now recruiting and will compare cancer control and quality of life outcomes of early radiation therapy vs surveillance in patients who have had their prostate removed and whose cancer has a low risk of progression or metastasis. The surveillance arm will employ the new PSMA PET/CT scans, which use a radioactive substance to target the protein known as prostate-specific membrane antigen, commonly found on prostate cancer cells.

Professor Ian Davis, Chair of ANZUP, said that this new collaboration combines the complementary expertise and resources of both organisations.

“We are delighted to be working with The George Institute, which brings its global experience in working with international partners to maximise research impact and ensure global reach, while ANZUP brings renowned leadership in urogenital cancer clinical trials, and multidisciplinary experts working to improve outcomes for people with cancers of the genitourinary system,” he said.

“We’re proud of the collaborations we are forging with a number of national and international research groups to improve treatment and outcomes for patients living with genitourinary cancers by running world-class clinical trials and delivering the best possible standard of care. Our work with The George Institute will help us have an even wider and more effective impact.”

A/Prof Mei-Ling Yap, Head of the Cancer Program at The George Institute said that prostate cancer was the most common cancer diagnosed in Australia and the fourth most common globally.

“It’s important not only to improve the survival of people diagnosed with prostate cancer around the world, but also to optimise their quality of life through the minimisation of treatment side effects,” she said.

“For people who have surgery for prostate cancer, up to one third will have changes in their follow up-blood tests which indicate that their cancer has returned. For these patients, we want to better identify who needs need early radiation therapy and in whom it is safe to wait.”

Professor Bruce Neal, Executive Director of The George Institute in Australia, said “This is a really exciting new collaboration for us. By combining the deep cancer expertise at ANZUP with our skills in getting new ideas tested in the real world, I believe we can make a big difference. This is a great example of two world-leading Australian research groups joining forces to maximise impact.”

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**About DIPPER (ANZUP 2002)**

While removal of the prostate is an effective treatment for many individuals with prostate cancer, around one third of patients will experience return of their cancer (recurrence). Commonly, this is diagnosed when a blood test called prostate specific antigen, or PSA, becomes elevated. Provided there is no spread of cancer seen on scans, a ‘watch and wait’ surveillance approach, or radiotherapy are both reasonable treatment pathways in individuals deemed to be at low risk of further spread.

However, no-one knows yet what is the best treatment in this situation. While radiotherapy can be effective, it can result in side effects, and these can affect quality of life. It might be possible that a personalised selection of individuals for surveillance using blood tests and newer imaging tests, such as PSMA PET scans, might identify a group of people who do not need additional radiation or other treatments and might be able to have similar outcomes for the cancers without the side effects. The DIPPER trial will compare cancer control and quality of life outcomes for individuals receiving either radiotherapy or surveillance following recurrence of their cancer after personalised patient selection, utilising the new imaging test and other clinical information. You can read more information on the ANZUP website -

<https://anzup.org.au/clinical-trial/dipper/>.

### **About ANZUP**

ANZUP is the leading cancer-cooperative clinical trials group that brings together all of the professional disciplines and groups involved in researching and treating urogenital cancers and conduct of high quality clinical research. ANZUP identifies gaps in evidence and areas of clinical need, collaborate with the best clinicians and researchers in GU cancer and communicate frequently and effectively with the broader community along the way. ANZUP receives valuable infrastructure support from the Australian Government through Cancer Australia.

### **About The George Institute for Global Health**

The George Institute for Global Health is an independent medical research institute aiming to improve the health of millions of people worldwide by generating effective, evidence-based and affordable solutions to the world's biggest health challenges. Established in Sydney, with major centres in China, India and the UK, it has projects in more than 45 countries and affiliations with world-class universities. In 2018, The George Institute was ranked the number-one independent research institute in Australia by Times Higher Education.