Vascular News

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XXV Australasian College of Phlebology Scientific meeting Report

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Our very successful 25th Annual Scientific meeting in May 2025 in the JW Marriot Hotel in the Gold Coast Queensland, was yet another exemplar of the aims and objectives of the Australasian College of Phlebology and of the outcomes of meeting them.

The College is a modern and progressive group with a young and energetic governance group and a passionate membership who facilitate our dynamic and innovative programs workshops and preceptorships. The ACP promotes education and research and aims to meet and inform the needs of the community, government, insurance providers, regulatory authorities and industry in terms of a knowledgeable resource relating to venous disorders and their co-morbidities. The multidisciplinary mix of specialities such as vascular surgery, dermatology, radiology, hematology, vascular medicine and importantly lymphology and the involvement of a range of health professionals such as sonographers, scientists, nurses and therapists helps us in the dissemination of information about the holistic management of all forms of venous disease.

In the lead up to this meeting our members Prof Kurosh Parsi and Dr David Connor lead the International team who finalised the Consensus paper on Arterial Injury

The 2025 meeting was opened by our Chair Dr Lisa Marks and facilitated through the dedicated work of our organising committee, Dr David Connor, Ms Zivka Nichols and Ms Jan Cornay.

The meeting was a melding of exciting discussion, insightful presentations both by our invited and local speakers and students and importantly as always the opportunity to forge connections with fellow clinicians, researchers scientists and professionals from Australia, New Zealand and around the world.

Importantly throughout the Meeting the college as always showed its strong commitment and support in the delivery of the ACP's world class 4 year basic and advanced training program celebrating the success of our recently graduated trainees from New Zealand and Australia.

At this meeting our keynote invited speakers were the amazing Clinical Professor Eri Fukaya who is a vascular medicine specialist at the Stanford University School of Medicine and whose interest is in the area of Chronic Venous Disease which focuses on the genetic underpinnings and pathophysiology of chronic venous disease along with how we can work together with societal groups to increase vascular disease awareness and improve access to care through the use of mobile health and information technology.

In terms of the genetic links, she emphasised that the pathophysiology of chronic venous disease is clearly linked to chronic inflammation linked to chronic venous

hypertension. Eri also emphasized that the pathophysiology is triggered by a specific generic aberration which can be worsened by a range of the individuals' other co-morbidities, their age, their environment and lifestyle. - Emphasizing the need for holistic awareness and care. She emphasized that we need to have a better understanding of epigenetics and its roles in the development of venous disease and what our leverage points are.

Our other keynote speaker was Professor Mark Whiteley who is recognised for performing the first endovenous surgery in the UK (1999) and who is credited with the invention of Translumenal Occlusion of Perforators (TRLOP) a minimally invasive process using needle access and small radio frequency cannula for the occlusion of perforators. He also helped pioneer endovenous microwave and HIFU treatments. He founded the UK based College of Phlebology and runs courses, fellowship programs and the COP venous registry. In his keynote address he reiterated that as phlebology starts to become a separate entity that those in the discipline and those entering it must have a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the phlebologist. He indicated that there may be conflict between the patient's perception of the problem and what the dedicated phlebologist may find to the real cause of the presenting problem.

Further there is still often a lack of clarity as to what falls under the domain of phlebology and the phlebologist indicating that while their role is to investigate and treat leg veins that the problems arising from them can range from cosmetic concerns to symptomatic varicose veins and skin damage. While most accept that venous leg ulcers fall under the speciality of phlebology as a progression of the varicose veins/venous incompetence many phlebologists tend to limit their care to management of any venous reflux/ stasis and avoid issues relating to the deep veins and ulcer wound care.

For this and other reasons such as a clear awareness by all that the venous system is every where Mark clearly indicated that we need as the ACP (and other international bodies) to better understand the limits of phlebology and align our aims with the needs of our patients.

Other speakers included Prof Johann Chris Ragg who discussed haemodynamic pressure and who presented evidence to substantiate it to be the most important component of venous insufficiency progression, and Dr Vaughan Keeley who discussed the important roles that ICG and Lymphoscintigraphy had in helping discover the functional status of the superficial and deep lymphatic system and showcasing our great multidisciplinary learning and knowledge base Ms Monika Samolyk presented a range of case examples where it was clear that our vascular guidelines which are often based on controlled artificial laboratory environments did not align with reality and that this divide between the literature and clinical reality could result in misdiagnosis or less than optimal treatments. Ms Anna Hetherington presented on the role of the podiatrist and their knowledge contribution to Phebology as part of the session on the treatment of challenging patients.

As always presentations of the ways we treat and manage challenging patients and a range of clinical puzzles ranging from glomuvenous malformations in lymphoedema to soft tissue ossification in CVI to the management of lipoedema/lymphoedema when there is recurrent DVT's leads us forward in our knowledge and the ways in which phlebologists can make a difference in the care of our diverse patient community.

As always, our basic and advanced training courses preceded the meeting with the trainee’s gaining knowledge in areas such as how to set up a phlebology practice to the basics and depths of venous physiology and pathophysiology to sclerotherapy and its possible complications, endogenous thermal ablation and how to manage patients with lymphatic disease under or overlying the venous issues. These sessions and the closely linked workshops in ultrasound and how to perform CVI scans of the superficial veins and deep venous scans for DVT and incompetence ensure that our future phlebologists are well versed in the identification assessment and management of venous and related issues based on holistic and comprehensive care linked to a up to date and well-informed level of evidence and practical experience.

We look forward to carrying our knowledge forward and further improving it at our next meeting in Melbourne 24th to 27th Apr. Hope you see you there to help us better help our community.