

PRESENTERS FOR SYMPOSIUM 6:
Interstitial cells as novel pharmacological targets:
advances in gastro-intestinal and urogenital systems

Dr Betty Exintaris, Monash University



Betty obtained her PhD in 2000 and started a full time academic position in the Department of Pharmaceutical Biology and Pharmacology (Victorian College of Pharmacy, Monash University) in the same year. In 2004, she completed a 2 year 'Graduate Certificate in Higher Education'. In her role as an academic, she lectures, demonstrate practical classes, co-ordinate 2 units and co-ordinate the Honours program for the Department of Drug Discovery Biology. She have been voted 'Lecturer of the Year' by the 1st year Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Science students in 2006, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012. She also runs a research program on prostate physiology and disease and currently this is the only group in the world investigating the spontaneous contractile and electrical activity in the human prostate gland. She has >27 manuscripts in high quality, peer-reviewed journals and >50 published abstracts from conference proceedings. Her program has been previously funded by NH&MRC.

Dr Scott Smid, The University of Adelaide



Scott was awarded his PhD in Pharmacology in 1995 from The University of Adelaide. After undertaking postdoctoral research in a commercial preclinical setting, he then took up academic appointments in Queensland before returning to The University of Adelaide. Scott has maintained a strong basic research interest in gastrointestinal therapeutics, investigating novel anti-inflammatory targets in colitis. His research encompasses a range of functional and molecular approaches, with a particular emphasis on the use of human tissue. He also has collaborations in mucositis research and cancer therapeutics, as well as more diverse collaborations investigating novel neuroprotective ligands in Alzheimer's disease.

Dr Donna Sellers, Bond University



Dr Sellers was appointed to Bond University in 2010, and prior to that spent her academic career at a number of leading universities in the UK, including Sheffield Hallam University, the University of Sheffield and University of Manchester. Dr Sellers' research interests focus on the physiological and pharmacological functioning of smooth muscle in health and disease. In particular within the genitourinary tract and cardiovascular system in relation to disorders such as overactive bladder, stress incontinence and diabetic bladder dysfunction, as well as cardiovascular conditions such as atherosclerosis. She is co-chair of the ASCEPT special interest group for Gastrointestinal and Urogenital Research and an active member of a number of professional societies including ASCEPT, the International Continence Society, the European Urological Association and the British Pharmacological Society.

Professor Helena Parkington, Monash University



Professor Helena Parkington has a long-standing interest in the processes that optimise the birth of a healthy baby at term. To this end her research has focussed on reproductive smooth muscle function in relation to pre-eclampsia, gestational diabetes and pre-term and protracted labour, and on neuronal function following perinatal hypoxia, preterm birth and placental insufficiency. Our approach is one of "vertical integration" that encompasses ion channels, tissue reactivity and whole animal studies in rats, sheep, non-human primates and women. Strong collaborations with clinical colleagues have been forged to better focus research to clinical issues and to enhance the possibility of translation of research outcomes to public health needs. Our recent work has highlighted the effects of *in utero* vitamin D deficiency, the effects of moderate maternal alcohol consumption in pregnancy, and prenatal glucocorticoids on cardiovascular function in the offspring. Our results can help provide a framework for those setting clinical guidelines.