

World Leaders in Pathology gather for Cutting Edge Talks

Some of the world's foremost experts in pathology and medical research are gathering in Melbourne this weekend to share findings across a multitude of topics.

Pathology Update is hosted by the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia, (RCPA) and this year's conference has attracted over 130 speakers from Australia, New Zealand, the US, Canada and the UK. More than 1200 pathologists and scientists from the public and private sectors throughout Australasia are attending the conference.

President of the College, Associate Professor Paul McKenzie, says the conference is the perfect opportunity for some of the best minds in pathology and medical research to gather under one roof, sharing unique insights into the practice and science of pathology from around the world.

"Pathology Update gives us the opportunity to hear from the people who are at the cutting edge of pathology practice in Australia and internationally, and also from those doing research in this vital area of medicine, sharing their knowledge and experience with those in the diagnostic areas of pathology," says A/Professor McKenzie.

Among the speakers are five international medical experts, including Australian born Dr Richard Gibbs, one of the leading figures in research on Human Genome Sequencing. Dr Gibbs is currently Distinguished Professor of Molecular and Human Genetics and Director for the Human Genome Sequencing Centre in Houston, Texas.

Other international speakers include Dr Christine Cserti-Gazdwich, a consultant haematologist from Toronto, Canada. Dr Sunny Dzik, an Associate Professor of the Harvard Medical School, will also speak about research in the area of transfusion medicine.

Professor Ian Ellis, from Nottingham University in the UK, will share his innovative research in advances in breast cancer diagnoses, which allow vastly improved individual treatment for patients with this devastating disease. Dr Robert Odze, Professor of Pathology at the Harvard Medical School, will speak about his important work in cancers of the gastrointestinal tract.

Other cutting edge topics being discussed at Pathology Update include antibiotic resistance, tuberculosis, malaria and heart disease.

A/Professor McKenzie says that although most people never come face-to-face with pathologists, they rely on these highly skilled and experienced professionals to keep their health on course.

"It's no exaggeration to say that, without pathology, medicine would still be in the dark ages.

Without a firm diagnostic basis from pathology any medical treatment which follows can be futile or inappropriate."

This weekend's Pathology Update Conference at the Melbourne Convention Centre coincides with the announcement by Federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon that she intends to push ahead with funding cuts to the pathology sector, a move that has been met with surprise and disbelief by the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia which has been excluded from negotiations.

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