

From the RAMUS Team

Welcome to the April 2018 issue of the RAMUS Newsletter.

In January 2018 the RAMUS Team farewelled our RAMUS Manager, Lesley Jandric. Lesley and her family have moved to Hobart for a Tree Change and we wish them all the very best for the future. We will miss Lesley very much but hope to catch up from time to time when she visits Canberra and also at the 15th National Rural Health Conference in Hobart in March 2019.

This newsletter contains the announcement of the 2017 mentor award winner. Congratulations to Dr Ashish Agar for his outstanding contribution to RAMUS through mentoring RAMUS recipient Sascha Spencer.

Also in this edition you will find information about the 15th National Rural Health Conference and an outline of the April issue of the Australian Journal of Rural Health (AJRH). Scholars have free online access to the AJRH through the RAMUS website.

The next RAMUS newsletter will be issued in late June. Contributions (including photos) and suggestions are very welcome. Please send them to ramus@ruralhealth.org.au by 15 June.

Best wishes

Janine Snowie and the RAMUS Team

Keep your contact details up-to-date

Have you recently moved house or changed your email address? You can update your details online through the RAMUS website.

To update your details go to:

<http://ramus.ruralhealth.org.au/update-ramus-scholar-details>

Scholar requirements now due

A reminder that Scholar Mentor plans are now due.

Please ALSO ensure you are a member of your Rural Health Club as we will be confirming membership with the Clubs shortly.

RAMUS on Facebook

Have you joined the RAMUS Facebook group yet?

The pages contains current RAMUS news, you can ask the RAMUS team questions or communicate with other RAMUS scholars, mentors and alumni.

To join the RAMUS Facebook group, go to: www.facebook.com/groups/348490061904468/

Note: this is a closed Facebook group, exclusively for RAMUS scholars, mentors and alumni.

RAMUS Mentor Awards

Dr Ashish Agar has been recognised as the RAMUS Mentor of the Year for 2017.

Dr Ashish Agar is an Ophthalmologist who works in Sydney and rural locations across NSW.

He was nominated by Sascha Spencer.

Sascha wrote "Dr Agar is an Ophthalmologist who works in both Sydney and in rural locations all over NSW. He is also the best doctor I have ever worked with. I was lucky enough to have him as my supervisor last year for the UNSW research year, and because our project was a clinical project, I shadowed him for the whole year at his clinics.

As a medicine student sitting in clinics, we learn from our consultants not just medical knowledge, but also examples of the kinds of doctors we'd like to be, or sometimes behaviours to avoid. Dr Agar was kind and thoughtful in each and every consultation of the hundreds, possibly thousands, that I sat in for. He was never judgemental, always took the time to explain to his patients anything they wanted to know, always made sure they were comfortable, and actively involved in their own care. I lost count of how many of his patients, both in Sydney and Broken Hill, made the point of telling me how much they loved him, and how lucky they felt to have him as their doctor.

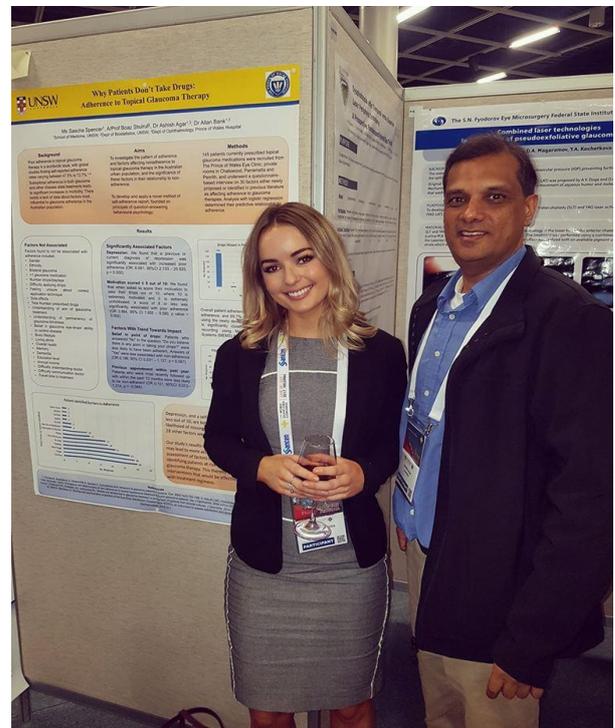
Despite being such a great doctor, he is also incredibly modest. While I knew that he was passionate about rural and Indigenous health, it was from other people that I learned that he is instrumental in the delivery of the Outback Eye Service in NSW, and that he is the director of the Ophthalmology service at Broken Hill. I didn't know that he was the Chair of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of

Ophthalmology's Indigenous committee until I attended the conference session from my own interest, and found him onstage directing the session, outlining the RANZCO plan to improve both Indigenous eye health and representation within the college.

As my mentor, he has also looked out for me a lot. He's created so many opportunities for me, from a job organising an Ophthalmology writers group, to placements in the WA Outback and Nepal. He has also set an example of the kinds of things I'd like to do in my medical career, and the kind of doctor I'd like to be.

I would be proud to turn out as even half as good a doctor as him, and I can't think of anyone more deserving of a Mentor Award".

The RAMUS team congratulates Dr Agar for being such an inspiring mentor.



Dr Agar and Sascha Spencer presenting research at the World Glaucoma Congress.

Thoughts from Completing Scholars

We enjoy reading end of year reports from completing Scholars as they reflect on the interesting and varied year they have had. Below are a selection from 2017.

‘In April this year, I was fortunate to join a wonderful group of inspiring minds at the National Rural Health Conference in sunny Cairns. The opportunity to listen, engage and draw upon ideas from likeminded delegates was a truly memorable experience. In particular, it was enjoyable to meet fellow RAMUS scholars and share in our common experience of overcoming challenges to being a rural medical student in Australia. Seldom do we have the chance to engage with future colleagues from across Australia and the 14th National Rural Health Conference provided the perfect opportunity to do so.’

‘In Alice Springs I was heavily involved in clinics as well as operating theatre lists and ward work. Time in the clinic environment allowed me to get to know each of my patients and their stories. I was able to enhance my understanding of the challenges faced by patients who must travel long distances to access healthcare. It was also an exercise in not only problem solving, but also the anticipation of problems which may arise as a result of geographical, social and cultural complexities. There I was pleased to see that there was no compromise in the quality of the student education in a smaller centre, with regular teaching scheduled throughout the week. Its comforting to know that remoteness does not equate to complacency.’

‘I am thankful to my mentor, Dr Cassandra Worme, for her ongoing support throughout the last four years as a RAMUS Scholar. I have gained much professional guidance from Dr Worme and I hope to remain in contact in the future.

I extended all my thanks to the RAMUS staff for the commitment, support and care over the past four years. The opportunities and experiences I have gained as a RAMUS scholar have been incredibly rewarding and have provided a unique foundation for my future career in rural health. I look forward to remaining part of the RAMUS community in the future.’

‘My medical team in Mt Isa also did an outreach to Doomadgee while I was there, and MICRRH allowed me to go with them. The plane touched down in Doomadgee as the first stop on the ‘milk run’ between Mt Isa and Cairns and I was welcomed to a different world. The clinic was unlike any I had been involved with before. The Indigenous health workers would go pick up locals and bring/convince them to come to their appointments.

Unfortunately my first day in the clinic, there was a funeral organized, and the community was going through sorry business. I had never being exposed to this before, and I was very fortunate to see this in such a strong indigenous culture. While I was there I saw more examples of this culture, and many examples of how medicine is practiced in such a remote location. During this stay I had the amazing experience of meeting an elderly lady, who at one point during her life was a nanny in the Muttaborra region who had looked after my fathers family. The joy she had at meeting this little ‘jooba’ (me) will not be soon forgotten.’



Calling all students!

Would you like to attend the next National Rural Health Conference and mingle with current and future leaders of the rural and remote health sector in Australia?



The purpose of the National Rural Health Conference is to provide the opportunity for delegates to exchange information on the latest developments in rural and remote health, to network with new and old friends, and to craft a set of policy recommendations for action.

Among other things, the Conference aims to inspire and inform; help build interdisciplinary health teamwork; provide an opportunity for research reports to be delivered by both experienced and early-career researchers; anticipate developments and issues and help set the sector's agenda; and promote a stronger awareness of rural and remote health issues in the wider community.

The student voice is an important part of this Conference and all students are encouraged to consider submitting an abstract for a place on the Program.

You can find everything you need to know about the Conference and how to submit an abstract on the website at www.ruralhealth.org.au/15nrhc

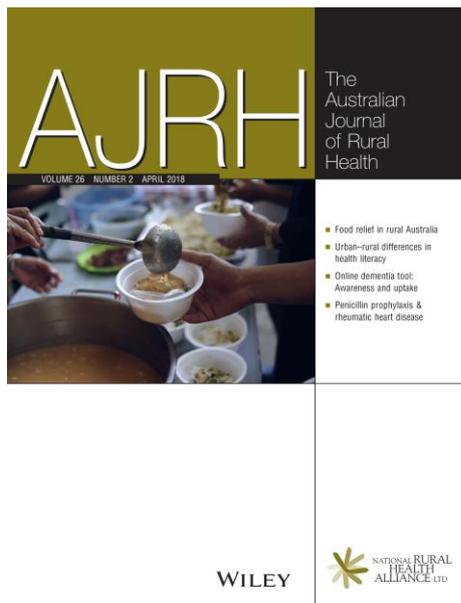
Australia Journal of Rural Health

The April 2018 issue of AJRH is now available online. Contents include:

- Rural and remote health research: does the investment match the need?
- Service-learning partnerships: Features that promote transformational and sustainable rural and remote health partnerships and services.
- Food provisions among food relief agencies in rural Australia, and perceived barriers and enablers to provide healthy food;
- Exploring the use of drug trend data in the regional alcohol and other drug workforce;
- Urban-rural differences in health literacy and its determinants in Iran: A community-based study;
- Addressing the needs of first-time fathers in Tasmania: A qualitative study of father-only antenatal groups;
- Towards good dementia care: Awareness and uptake of an online Dementia Pathways tool for rural and regional primary health practitioners; and
- Effect of secondary penicillin prophylaxis on valvular changes patients with rheumatic heart disease in far north Queensland.

AJRH Short Reports:

- Are patients with concussions getting optimal discharge advice at a regional emergency department?
- Palliative care in the Top end: The continuing cancer bias;
- Rural patients with inflammatory bowel disease have low engagement and reporting of psychological distress: A pilot study.



Indemnity and insurance

As a RAMUS scholar, it is your responsibility to ensure that you have the appropriate indemnity insurance cover if you are undertaking supervised clinical activity as part of your RAMUS-related rural activities; such as during visits to or placements with your RAMUS mentor.

You may be asked by medical practices or health services to provide evidence of your indemnity insurance cover.

Don't assume that your RAMUS rural activities are automatically covered by the university's indemnity and insurance arrangements for medical students. You should check whether the planned activities are included in your university indemnity insurance cover. Those that do not form part of your formal university course and curriculum requirements may not be covered.

You can consider joining a medical defence organisation (MDO) that provides medical indemnity insurance. Several MDOs offer special packages for medical students for free or at low cost

University Survival Guide

The Country Education Foundation of Australia has created a University Survival Guide for rural and regional students to help make the transition of moving away from home to pursue study or jobs just that little bit easier. Head to their website to find more:

<https://cef.org.au/students/uniguide/>



RAMUS is managed by the National Rural Health Alliance Ltd on behalf of the Australian Government



www.ruralhealth.org.au