

TISSUE PAPER

Histotechnology Group of Queensland



President's Report- Jerres Alcober

Welcome to this edition of the Tissue Paper. Despite the challenges attributed to the global pandemic, 2020 was a year that provided the committee an opportunity to adapt, innovate and diversify to meet our objectives and goals to benefit HGQ members. A key achievement for the 2020 committee was the success in providing real-time online collaborative scientific meetings via Zoom and having recordings of these meetings available via our main social media platform, Facebook. We also tried our hand at running a combined real-time online and on-site scientific meeting. This exposure has given the committee valuable experience which will assist with improvements and further developments in how we can deliver continuing education opportunities to members.

Since the last newsletter, the 2020 AGM & 4th Scientific Meeting was hosted at The Normanby Hotel in November. Dr Lauren Furnas and Dr Jo Lin Tee provided interesting Neurological and Skin Pathology case studies for our on-site and online guests. Thanks to our speakers, sponsors and members for contributing to and attending this event. I would like to congratulate and welcome the 2021 HGQ Committee-elect: President – Mark Bromley (SNP); Secretary – Amanda Marsden (PQ-PAH); Treasurer – Jonathan Boyle (PQ-TPCH); Melissa Hillas (Mater); Chris Cazier (QUT); Lloyd Blundell (Trade); Emma Hughes



(SNP); Brett Harrison (Trade); Maddison Burrowes (QUT); Sharee Durdin (QML); Sara Konwisarz (PQ-TPCH); Samantha Arandelovic (Mater); Jerres Alcober (PQ-TPCH). Thank you to the 2020 HGQ committee for their contributions and achievements during the unprecedented year. The newlyelected HGQ Committee are ready for a better and brighter 2021.

As this will be my final President's Report for the Tissue Paper, I would like to personally thank previous & current committee and members for the opportunity to serve 5 years as Secretary followed by 5 years as President. I will be continuing on in the committee in 2021 and look forward to working along side the 2021 Committee and President, Mark Bromley. Lastly, if you would like to keep up to date with the HGQ, take advantage of free membership at www.hgq.org.au. Until the next edition, take care, stay safe, and enjoy!! Happy reading ;)

We are always looking for contributions of scientific articles and news, or if you have improvements and techniques that make a difference in your lab!

Submissions can be sent to [HGQ Tissue Paper](#) in digital format



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Goodbye 2020!

Dr Admire Matsika, Mater Pathology

“As of early December 2020, more than 60 million people have been infected”.

The COVID-19 pandemic is perhaps the worst global health crisis of the century. In some parts of the world, the infectious disease has decimated health systems and put unprecedented pressure on health workers. As of early December 2020, more than 60 million people have been infected worldwide with 1.5 million dying from complications attributable to the disease. A few positive changes have come out of the COVID-19 pandemic, perhaps the least of which is how the disease has further enriched the ever-evolving English language as well as our medical lingo. And if you are reading this, be grateful that you survived the Great Australian Tissue Paper Wars of 2020.

The rona forced some Aussie states to go into total lockdown several times during the year. Newly arrived travellers and symptomatic individuals would go into iso for at least two weeks and some positive cases quarantined at homes, in health institutions and motels. Citizens developed coronaphobia resulting in a coronacopia of public places and events being shunned. This helped in maintaining physical distancing - perhaps a more appropriate term for social distancing - the bitter societal pill that was prescribed to us by clinical epidemiologists. Socialising and

working remotely, for example, through zooming was encouraged, as was greeting with elbow-bumps and foot-shakes. Work from home (WFH) became the norm for those who could, but excessive zooming led to a spike in zoombombing, and zoom-dysmorphia made plastic surgeons busier.

The initial impression by the younger generations was that the rona was just a boomer flu. However, it quickly became clear, even among covidiot that the young and healthy were not entirely immune to the disease. The economic shutdown gave rise to a boomerang generation in the eastern states - predominantly young people on federal job-keeper and job-seeker payments, who went back to live with their parents after losing employment.

By mid-year, we had learnt that some unfortunate individuals could become coronic twice, a double whammy that some colloquially labelled COVID-38. Wearing masks in public became mandatory in some states while others wore them as a fashion statement or just to show how woke they were. Afraid of being named and shamed, some Melbournians just wore them so as not to be outed as antimaskers or maskholes on television and social media. Talk of adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) became main-stream and proper techniques for applying the sanny, masking, doffing and donning were expected of everyone, not just health professionals carrying out procedures. Proning proved to be a lifesaving technique for patients with dyspnoea in the intensive care setting. Despite our best

efforts at masking and staying upbeat, an uptick in quarantine affective disorders (QAD), maskacne and coronabrain were reported worldwide.

“This led to vaccine-hesitancy, a phenomenon that affected even the most rational amongst us who were concerned about safety and efficacy of the pending vaccines”.

2020 is the year when conspiracy theories went into overdrive. For a few weeks, social media platforms were abuzz with the notion that this was not a natural pandemic but rather, a plandemic, masterminded by a retired computer company founder and his philanthropist mates. Such moronavirus-infected individuals mobilised and staged demonstrations across the world, adamant that this illness was caused by 5G mobile networks or was just another ploy to inject us all with microchips disguised as jabs, in preparation for the new world order. It did not help sceptics much that the development of COVID-19 vaccines was expedited - and sometimes russianed. This led to vaccine-hesitancy, a phenomenon that affected even the most rational amongst us who were concerned about safety and efficacy of the pending vaccines.

Unsurprisingly, by the end of the year most of us were suffering from COVID-fatigue although public antisocial nearing with strangers remained shunned upon. Some mental

well-being advocates recommended beating the pandemic-piñata as a way to relieve our frustrations from the disease. Germ-bubbles were recommended by some experts as the remedy, as was outdoor vertical consumption with one's germ buddies when enjoying a quarantini or two in social places. However, going into

2021, it was clear that medical science was coming to the rescue with potentially effective vaccines, and the coronapocalypse that pessimists had initially predicted would not eventuate. No social distancing zombies are expected to be seen roaming the streets over this Christmas holiday.

Happy New Year!

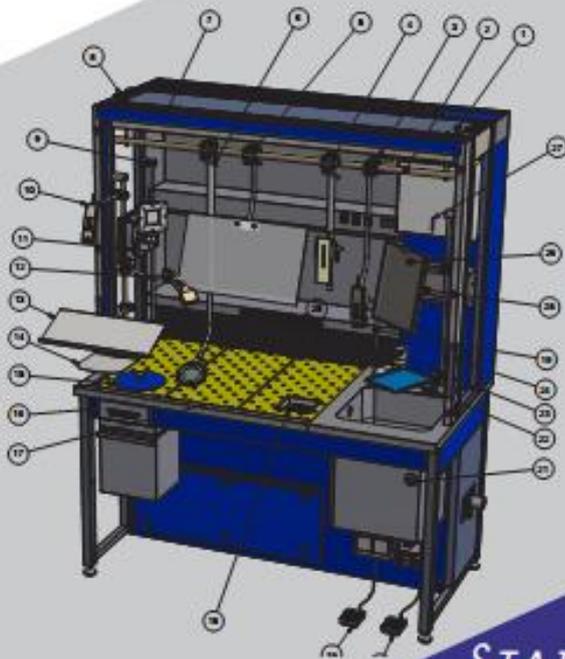
- Dr Admire Matsika, Mater Pathology

“Unsurprisingly, by the end of the year most of us were suffering from COVID-fatigue”.

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Dr Kayla Tran - Pathologist - The Prince Charles Hospital

1. What did you want to be when you grew up?

- Tall.... but unfortunately that didn't happen

2. What's the best piece of advice someone has given you?

- Mum once told me that the next generation should be better than the current generation, otherwise it means we haven't learnt from our predecessors and also because we should be taking the best bits from those who are teaching us → it's something I am trying to teach to my children and our registrars

3. What is your favourite stain and why?

- A tie between Masson trichome (so pretty) and Shikata orcein (very useful when done well)

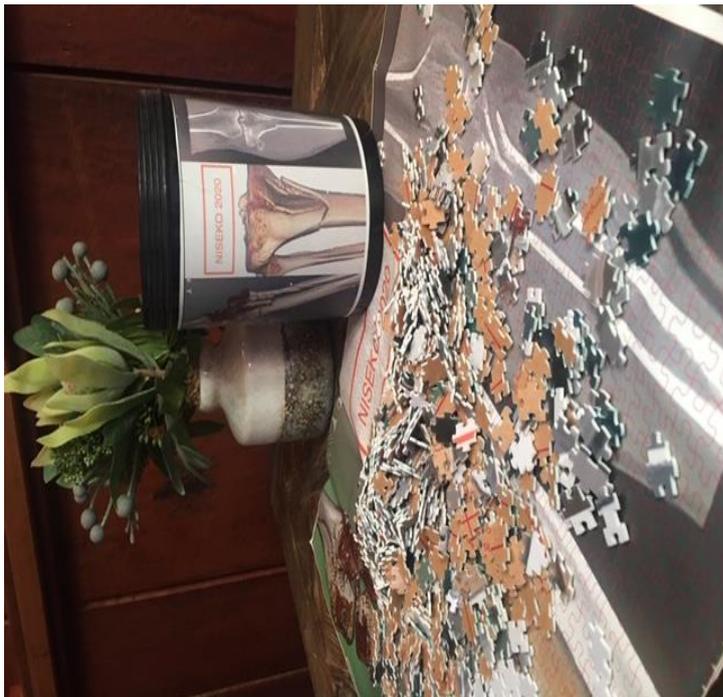


4. Do you have any hobbies/what do you do in your spare time?

- I was doing jigsaw puzzles when we were under restrictions - my husband broke his leg skiing earlier this year and for his birthday present I got him a 1000 piece jigsaw puzzle made up of the CT and Xray scans of his fracture

5. Do you have a hidden/special skill?

- I am incredibly good at burning food: I once burnt water and on another occasion, I burnt spaghetti. And then there was the time I was a medical student at Nambour Hospital and set the fire alarm off in the nurses' quarters while cooking lamb chops. The alarm went through the whole hospital and we had to wait for the fire department to come.



6. Favourite food?

- Souffle and anything that mum cooks

7. Dream holiday destination?

- Paris, with my daughter

8. If you could have dinner with anyone (present or past), who and why?

- My grandmother, with granddad, my mum and extended family. Grandma died in early April, at the height of COVID infections in QLD and for the last few weeks of her life she couldn't have visitors at her nursing home. It must have been a very lonely and confusing time for her not to be seeing her family and I wish the whole family could have one last dinner with her.



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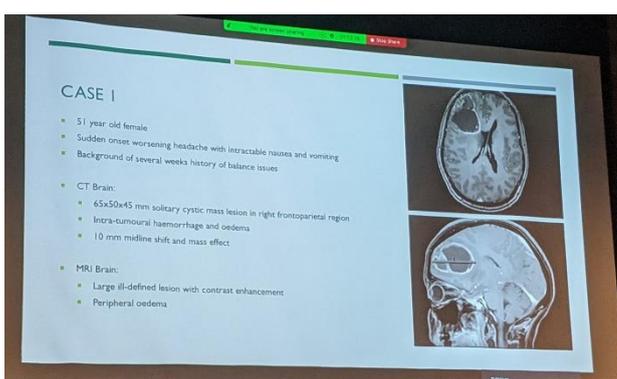
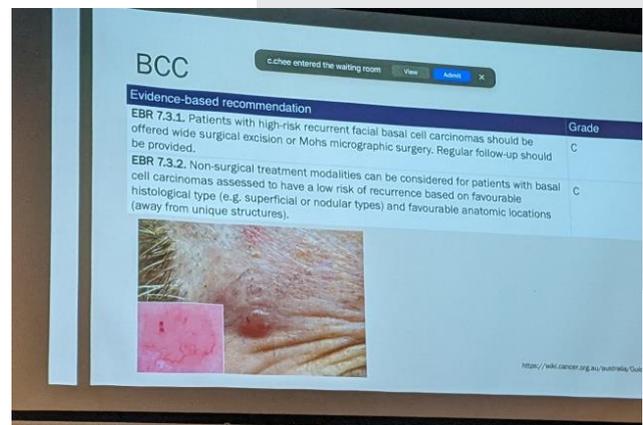


HGQ AGM and Scientific Meeting, 26th November 2020

- Anonymous

After a long year avoiding human contact, finally a few brave souls gathered the courage to engage face to face at the 2020 HGQ AGM and the final scientific meeting. Once again, The Normanby Hotel opened its doors and supplied the necessary fuel and was considerably sponsored by Trajan. Those who were unable to join in person zoomed in and showed great patience while technical details were ironed out.

The business started with the AGM, with no unexpected revelations from the past 12 months. While it is disappointing that the current Covid crisis prevented what would have been a fantastic conference, you'll be pleased to note that plans are still in place, just slightly delayed. The committee for the year were duly thanked, and then it was time to grab some fresh blood. There are quite a few new players for the 2021 committee, which shows that the HGQ still has an important part to play for all histo workers.



Once the sacrifices had been chosen, it was time to get an education. First up was Dr Jo Lin Tee with “Many Ways To Skin It” (everyone loves a pun). From clinical indications to surgical excision techniques to histological analysis, there was something for everyone to learn. For one of the

more common samples sent to histology, there is still more to consider than just the deep margin. Next on the floor was Dr Lauren Furnas with “Picking One’s Brain” (who said nerds don’t have a sense of humour). A brief overview of types and then a few case studies in, it became clear that brain is one of those areas which need more than just a H&E. But even with the advance of modern molecular techniques, there is a place for us.

Once again, a big thanks to the 2020 committee, in particular now-former “El Presidente” Jerres Alcober, and good luck to everyone for the coming year. May your covid vax be free of side effects.

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22**HISTOTECHNOLOGY
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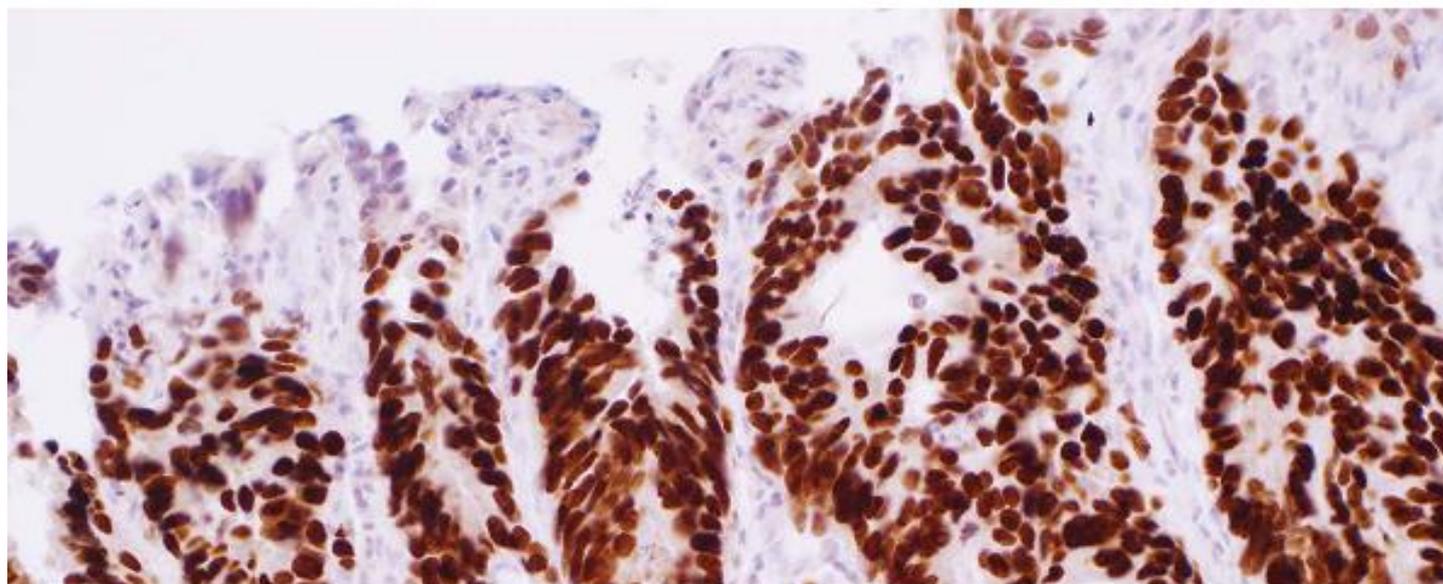
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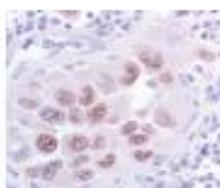
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References

1. Brucato J, et al. *Carcinogenesis*. 2010; 30:186-91.
2. Dragomir A, et al. *Am J Clin Pathol*. 2010; 113:90-4.
3. Ordóñez HG. *Adv Anat Pathol*. 2010; 17:33-7.

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