

# bcrc-wa what's news

Issue 2  
May 2014

NEWSLETTER OF  breast cancer  
research centre - WA

## Welcome to Issue 2!



### **Prof. Arlene Chan**

Director – Breast Cancer Trial Unit  
Vice-Chair – BCRC WA

### Welcome to our second 'What's News' for 2014.

In this edition we have an update on breast surgery and the increasingly important role for reconstruction by Dr Richard Martin.

Dr Martin covers the various options available to women and highlights the fact that good body image can very much be achieved, whilst maintaining the very best surgical treatment needed.

Angela D'Amore, an experienced dietician, provides a summary of the role of healthy diet and healthy weight.

For many women who want to optimise their diet, or simply be reassured that their diet is already optimal, ongoing seminars by Angela and her colleague are available for you to attend.

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# Latest Breast Cancer Surgery



**Dr. Richard Martin**

Breast cancer surgery has changed significantly over the last 50 years.

In the early 60s, there were no treatments for breast cancer other than surgery, and thus a radical approach was the norm.

We are now aware that breast cancer is a potentially systemic disease; whereby the use of chemotherapy and radiotherapy can lead to better outcomes. Therefore, breast surgery has become increasingly focused on preserving the form and function of the breast.

Oncoplastic surgery involves the use of proven cosmetic surgical techniques in the treatment of breast cancer, either for breast conservation or breast reconstruction after mastectomy.

This is usually accomplished either by a two surgeon method, with a breast surgeon working in tandem with a plastic surgeon, or solely by a breast surgeon trained in breast reduction, augmentation and reconstruction techniques.

The range of procedures available in treating breast cancer can sometimes be confusing and bewildering. It is important to understand that whether the breast is conserved or removed, there is no difference in overall survival.

Oncoplastic remodelling by means of Level 1 or Level 2 techniques have increased the possibilities of breast conservation. Often up to 40% of the breast volume can be removed by using breast reduction techniques while preserving the normal shape, albeit in a smaller sized breast. Contralateral remodelling or reduction can be undertaken if there is a significant size discrepancy.

There is a common misconception that removing the breast via mastectomy is a guarantee against getting breast cancer in the future. Unfortunately this only reduces the risk, it doesn't remove it altogether.

There is no reconstruction that can match the normal breast, the look will be similar, and in many cases almost the same, but it will never be an exact match to the normal breast tissue.

## Mind-Bender



What do you put on the table, cut and then pass around, but would never actually eat?

*Answer: A deck of cards*

Often breast reconstruction involves a series of operations or 'stages', and even when complete, there is often a need for revision at some stage down the track.

It is therefore important to consider whether a mastectomy is required before embarking down what is often a long and complicated series of major surgical operations, or if breast conservation is a viable alternative.

For those who need or desire mastectomy and reconstruction, there is also a variety of options ranging from simple to complex.

Expander followed by implant-based reconstruction is the simplest and easiest form of breast reconstruction.

It has the fastest recovery and return to normal function of any of the reconstructive options, and is by far the safest, least invasive method. 90% of patients are suitable for this method.

Latissimus Dorsi (LD) reconstruction is the next step up in complexity. Usually an expander followed by an implant is still required, and often two or more stages are involved, depending on the desired size of the breast.

LD reconstruction is a little more natural in its look and feel as compared to a sole implant based reconstruction, but the recovery and return to normal function is longer.

TRAM (Transverse Rectus Abdominus Myocutaneous) flap reconstruction is the next step up again in complexity and risk. Usually no implant is required and so the reconstruction is solely the patient's own tissue.

The recovery is longer again, as are the incisions, but the look and feel is the closest to a natural breast. Another advantage perhaps is the 'tummy tuck' that goes along with the breast reconstruction, however there are risks of complications from the abdominal surgery. It is important to be informed regarding reconstruction surgery options prior to choosing the type of surgery you want to have.



# Eat Well, Feel Well

An initiative of Breast Cancer Research Centre WA

Providing you with both complimentary and paid services which will assist you in maintaining a healthy lifestyle.



## Healthy Weight, Healthy Life

**Healthy Weight, Healthy Life** offers early breast cancer patients a free service to assist them with nutritional issues while on treatment.



## Symptom-Less

**Symptom-Less** is a free service that offers advanced breast cancer patients advice on how to deal with symptoms related to their treatment.



## Individualised Sessions

**Individualised Sessions** lets patients meet individually with a dietitian and the service will be specifically tailored to the patient's needs.

# Complementary Therapies

A lot of people with cancer want to know what else they can be doing to help with their treatment, to feel like they are contributing to their overall wellbeing.

Apart from always following instructions from your doctor and taking what is prescribed, there are also some easy and natural ways to look after your body and mind.

Complementary therapies should not be confused with “alternative” or herbal remedies, some of which can interfere with prescribed treatments and make them less effective. These include ‘remedies’ such as intravenous vitamin C therapy or apricot kernels for which there is no supporting scientific evidence.

Always tell your doctor or nurse about any herbal remedies you would like to take before you start taking them.

However, here are some tips which may help. Remember, everyone is different and may feel benefit from some things that another may not.

Nausea or indigestion? Try ginger, either fresh or in a tea.

Problems with fluid retention? Eat some fresh watermelon! Although it seems like it shouldn't, watermelon actually aids the body to get rid of excess fluid.



Can't sleep? Try remedial massage or acupuncture to relieve anxiety or tension.

Friends and family will try their best to say the right thing and be supportive but sometimes an objective ear is what is needed. There are some wonderful counselling and support services available here in WA. Ask your doctor or nurse to recommend someone.

**Linda Smith (RN)**  
BCRC-WA  
Breast Cancer Trial Unit

# The Magnificent Seven

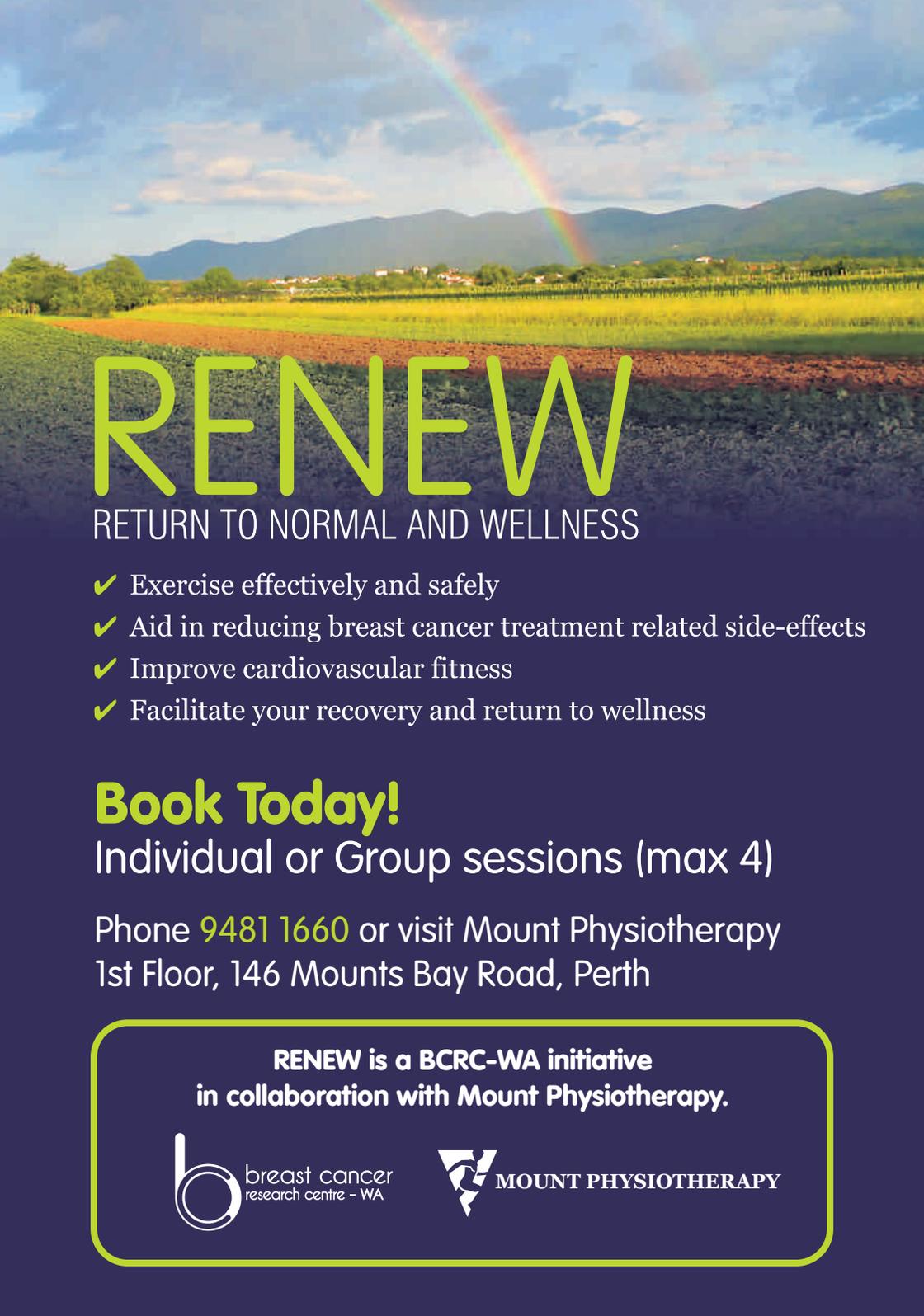
These amazing seven gentlemen recently competed in the 24-hour 'Delirium' cycling race.

An awesome effort was put in by all the team doing a total of 195 laps – that's 721.5km in a 24-hour period!

A local business owner (whose Aunty had breast cancer) challenged the team by offering a donation to BCRC-WA for every kilometre they rode.

A big thank you to all involved – we look forward to seeing how many kilometres these magnificent seven riders do next year!





# RENEW

RETURN TO NORMAL AND WELLNESS

- ✓ Exercise effectively and safely
- ✓ Aid in reducing breast cancer treatment related side-effects
- ✓ Improve cardiovascular fitness
- ✓ Facilitate your recovery and return to wellness

**Book Today!**

Individual or Group sessions (max 4)

Phone **9481 1660** or visit Mount Physiotherapy  
1st Floor, 146 Mounts Bay Road, Perth

**RENEW is a BCRC-WA initiative  
in collaboration with Mount Physiotherapy.**



**MOUNT PHYSIOTHERAPY**

# Staying Healthy

Staying healthy and maintaining a healthy weight is an important part of your breast cancer journey.

There has been a lot of research done in this area and it appears that the following points may reduce your risk of having a cancer recurrence, and reduce the risk of developing other medical conditions further down the track such as diabetes and heart disease. These are derived from the 2007 WCRF/AIDR Diet and Cancer Report

- 1) Maintain a healthy body weight (BMI 18.5-25) or avoid excess weight gain
- 2) A low fat diet with plenty of plant foods (5-7 portions a day) and moderate red meat consumption
- 3) Limit alcohol intake and include calcium rich foods to protect your bones
- 4) Physical activity during treatment can have several benefits such as decreasing fatigue, anxiety, chronic disease risk and loss of lean muscle mass

Research shows that Breast Cancer patients do lose lean muscle mass during their

chemotherapy treatment according to the Cancer Council NSW. This may be as a result of changes in diet and exercise patterns during their treatment. Losing too much lean muscle mass may affect your function and overall quality of life during treatment.

Increasing your protein intake may be beneficial if you are losing weight unintentionally. Ensure you are eating adequate amounts of high protein foods and try to include a source of protein at each meal.

For example lean animal proteins i.e Beef (limit of 500g per week), chicken and fish; Low fat milk, yoghurt or cheese or eggs and baked beans. Engaging in regular resistance or strength-based exercise may also help reduce muscle loss.

We have education seminars focusing on nutrition in patients diagnosed with breast cancer and you are welcome to attend even once you have commenced treatment.

Information is given here on: diet “myths” you may have heard about, achieving an adequate protein intake and managing the symptoms of chemotherapy through diet, as well as other topics.

For more information please call our BCRC-WA staff on 9321 2354 or email [info@bcrc-wa.com.au](mailto:info@bcrc-wa.com.au)

**Angela D'Amore**  
Dietitian



A special recognition to **Hudsons Coffee** who have generously donated catering and coffees at our PYNKS meetings as well as other BCRC-WA functions.

# Stuck-on-Junk Art

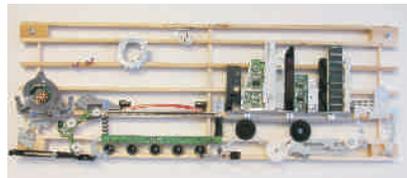
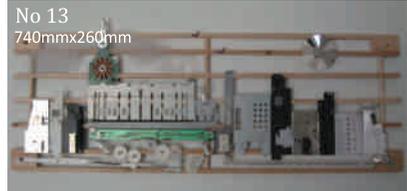
Our very talented Administration Officer, Veronica Vassallo, kindly donated one of her latest creations to the BCRC-WA office.

Veronica loves making handmade recycled wall art from printers, computers, hi-fi equipment and even old sewing machines.

‘Anything thrown out as rubbish can be given a new life,’ says Veronica.

Her pieces are lively, engaging and the way in which she represents them keeps you intrigued.

For more information, contact [stuck-on-art@hotmail.com](mailto:stuck-on-art@hotmail.com)



**“When you see beauty all around you,  
beauty will seek you and find you,  
even in the most unexpected places”**

**– Albert Villoldo**



# Pynks

POSITIVE • YOUNG • NURTURING  
KIDS/FAMILY-FOCUSSED • STRENGTH-GIVING

*Do you have secondary cancer?*

*Like to talk to like-minded people,  
who really understand?*

Pynks is a support and information group for younger women and those who are young at heart. Pynks provides facts and topics relevant to advanced secondary breast cancer.

For more information telephone **9321 2354**  
or email [info@bcrc-wa.com.au](mailto:info@bcrc-wa.com.au)



Pynks is a BCRC-WA initiative

# A Big Thank You to the Westside Drag Racing Association!

The Westside Drag Racing Association, just like anyone else, has had its fair share of members touched by cancer.

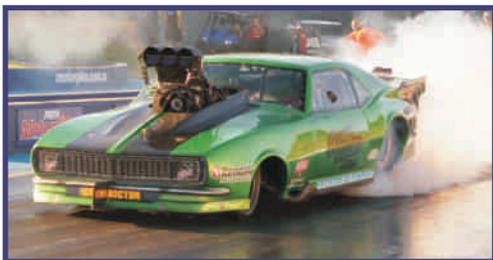
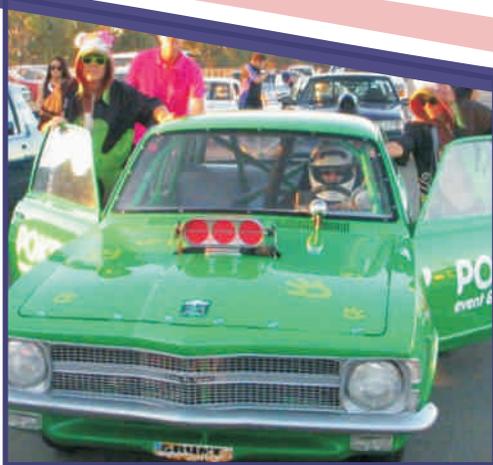
A couple of our lady racers and support crew are survivors, and of course there are the ones we have lost.

The recent loss of a club member's mother prompted us to throw the hat around and make a donation to the Breast Cancer Research Centre - WA to assist in our small way to further the research into this disease.

Drag racing is a family sport with junior racers starting as young as 8, and seniors who have raced up until the age of 70. We have been proudly running for over 40 years and have approximately 100 members at any one time.

Both men and women of all ages are part of the sport as drivers, support crew, volunteers or track staff.

With entry level off-street racing usually a couple of times a week at the Perth Motorplex during summer, there is plenty to keep us all young at heart.



Drag racers are no strangers to fundraising for a good cause so it was our pleasure to have been able to help in some small way the Breast Cancer Research Centre-WA and thank them for the work they do.

For information on drag racing in Australia, contact the Australian National Drag Racing Association Inc at [www.andra.com.au](http://www.andra.com.au)

**Liz Johns**  
Westside Drag Racing Association

# Monthly Recipe

Our guest home chef is Virginia Brooke.

Virginia is an inspiration to all at BCRC-WA because of her positive attitude, support and encouragement of other breast cancer patients.

You will adore these brownies!

“Enjoy and be naughty. Every time I eat one, I think of all the people on their own cancer journeys. Good luck,” Virginia says.

## Ginny's Chocolate Brownies

### INGREDIENTS

- 250g butter
- 2 cups raw/white sugar, 440g
- 3/4 cup cocoa, 75g
- 4 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- 1 1/4 cups plain flour, 185g
- Pinch of salt
- 1/2 cup crushed walnuts 50g.
- 3/4 cup 60/70g dust with Icing sugar

### DIRECTIONS

Pre-heat oven at 180°C.

Line baking or Pyrex dish 20x30cm with baking paper.

Melt butter. In large mixing bowl, add sugar and butter and mix. Add sifted cocoa powder, combine.



Beat eggs and vanilla essence together and add to mixture and stir. Sift flour and salt with the nuts coating them.

Add to mixture and mix. Place in dish.

Cook for 25/35mins, depending on your oven. (I like them slightly under than over-cooked.)

Leave in pan to cool. Cut into desired size pieces. (I cut into 30 small ones.)

If you would like to share your favourite recipe please send an email to [info@bcrc-wa.com.au](mailto:info@bcrc-wa.com.au)

# Meet the BCRC staff



**Introducing:**  
Frances McGlone  
**Position:**  
Clinical  
Research Nurse

## What does your role involve?

I am one of the Registered Nurses working in the Breast Clinical Trials Unit of BCRC-WA.

There are several different clinical trials going on concurrently, each one differing in design and purpose.

It is my role to interview the patients during the ongoing trial cycles to monitor and document any changes patients are experiencing, monitor their ongoing blood tests and assist Professor Chan and the team in their care.

## Tell us about yourself..

I am originally from the UK, where I became qualified as a Registered Nurse and Registered Midwife.

I immigrated to Sydney in 1988, moving to Perth in 1991. When I'm not working my passion is travel. I am fortunate to have travelled all around Australia, New Zealand, much of Europe and Asia, but still have much more of world to see.

When here in Perth, I love gardening and enjoying the outdoor life that this wonderful climate allows, which is such a novelty coming from the UK.

I am enjoying meeting all the lovely ladies who attend the breast clinical trials unit and furthering my knowledge in breast cancer treatments by working with the BCRC-WA team.

# Two Amazing School Girls

In the Christmas school holidays, 8-year-old Zu Rui and Sophia gave up their own time to raise money for BCRC-WA.

Zu Rui and Sophia set up a stand in their street selling home-made cookies and lemonade.

Wow, what an amazing effort from two amazing young school girls!



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and share us  
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 [facebook.com/bcrc-wa](https://facebook.com/bcrc-wa)

# 2014 PYNKS Opening Meeting

Professor Arlene Chan spoke at the 2014 PYNKS Opening Meeting on 'An evidence-based approach to metastatic breast cancer – where we are and what is the good news'.

PYNKS members attended with their friends and family – the room was filled to capacity with over 70 participants!

The morning was a great success. PYNKS member Sandra was encouraged by the talk:

"I attended Professor Arlene Chan's Pynks group presentation in January and it was definitely worth spending my Saturday morning listening to what she had to tell us all about the latest in secondary breast cancer research.

I don't really see much in the news about research for secondary cancer, so it was great to hear all the positive work that is being done. The descriptions of the different types of treatments being researched and how they work were very clear.

Professor Chan explained complex scientific subjects very clearly and was happy to answer lots of questions that we had.

It put into perspective where my treatment is in the whole scheme of what's available, so I was happy to know that I am receiving one of the most promising treatments available currently. I went home very happy knowing I am getting the best treatment possible and the future is looking better for further treatment options down the track when I need it."

Alex also agreed :

"The information discussed about all the upcoming trial drugs and new developments in treatment had given us encouragement and comfort which helped to overcome fear of the unknown, especially coming from such a devoted and passionate cancer specialist."



# PYNKS

Our March PYNKS session with Tony Brideson from Definitive was an excellent introduction to exercise physiology.

Tony enthusiastically talked about his field in human movement and sports science. Thank you to all the PYNKS ladies who attended.

Our May session of PYNKS will have SolarisCare in attendance. SolarisCare is a community-based healthcare organisation.

They will be discussing complementary integrated therapies especially touch-based and energy-based therapies.

If you have secondary cancer and you would like to join our PYNKS group please call our Admin Officer, Rochelle on 9321 2354.

All our existing PYNKS members are invited to attend the next session on May 24th, please email [info@bcrc-wa.com.au](mailto:info@bcrc-wa.com.au)





Striving to improve outcomes  
for patients with breast cancer.



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Help us get the  
word out there  
about the amazing  
work of BCRC-WA!