Melbourne Genomics
Health Alliance

Global knowledge. Individual care.

National and international connections: Symposia

Background

Through the work of Melbourne Genomics, Victoria has established a strong reputation nationally and internationally as a leader in overcoming the challenges of bringing genomic medicine to reality.

Twenty-five peer-reviewed publications have appeared (from 2016 to date) in international journals as a result of Melbourne Genomics' work, with more being drafted and submitted. These publications have been highly cited, and a number have been featured in journal commentary and editorial.

In excess of 150 national and international conference presentations (all oral presentations, both invited and proffered) have communicated results and knowledge gained from the Melbourne Genomics program 2016 to 2019.

Project description

The objective: to communicate knowledge, experience and key findings from across the Melbourne Genomics program to local and national stakeholders.

Melbourne Genomics held three symposia: one in 2016 and two in 2019.

The 'Demonstrating Success' Symposium held in 2016 presented key findings and lessons learned from Melbourne Genomics' Demonstration Project.

Two symposia were held in 2019 to report key findings and lessons learned from the 2016 to 2019 program, including presentations on Clinical Flagships, workforce education and genomic data programs.

Activities

The '**Demonstrating Success**' **symposium**, held at WEHI on 1 September 2016, was attended by more than 250 people. This half-day event covered outcomes from the five demonstration Clinical Flagships (2014 to 2015) and highlighted the benefits of shared approaches to genomic testing.

In March 2019, more than 20 speakers shared early results and lessons learned from Clinical Flagship projects in the 2016 to 2019 program at a half-day **Melbourne Genomics Symposium**. Attendees were welcomed by Victorian Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Mr Anthony Carbines, who announced formal commencement of the shared clinical system for genomics, GenoVic[1]. This event was held at WEHI and was attended by more than 250 people.

The '**Translating Genomics, Transforming Care**' Symposium was held over two days at The University of Melbourne, 7 and 8 November 2019. This event marked the close of the 2016 to 2019 program and featured two international guests[2] Professor Dame Sue Hill (who is leading implementation of genomics into NHS England) and Jillian Hastings Ward (Chair of the Participant Panel of the 100,000 Genomes Project) as keynote speakers.

[1] See Genomic data and information project summaries.
[2] See project summary, 'National and international connections: Visits and visitors'.

More than 260 people attended the two-day event, which featured in excess of 30 speakers and panellists representing projects across the Melbourne Genomics four-year program.

Outcomes

All events have demonstrated how genomics can deliver better patient care and greater efficiencies in the Victorian health system.

The symposia enabled networking between experts in different areas, furthering connections and opportunities for future collaboration.

Broad findings from the Clinical Flagships – first presented at the 'Translating Genomics, Transforming Care' Symposium – received media coverage in the *Herald Sun*, reaching an estimated audience of 11.2 million people. The article, 'Whole exome sequencing gives 40 per cent of patients useful data about disease for first time', communicated the value of genomic testing in clinical practice to an audience beyond symposium attendees.

Lessons learnt

- The symposia were attended by clinicians, researchers, informaticians, health economists, genetic counsellors, health administrators and public servants – demonstrating the wide interest and involvement in healthcare genomics.
- Attendees valued the broad variety of topics covered in each symposium, with a particular interest in patient perspectives and variant interpretation.
- More than one-third of attendees weren't involved in Melbourne Genomics, demonstrating significant interest from outside the Melbourne Genomics members in the work undertaken.