

CliniCon

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The Australian Society for Microbiology (ASM) held its inaugural CliniCon meeting following the completion of the ASM annual scientific meeting on the beautiful Darling Harbour in Sydney from 14 to 15 July 2022, with a focus on diagnostic and clinical microbiology. The meeting was held in a hybrid style with delegates catching up face to face or joining virtually.

The meeting commenced with a light lunch where delegates and trade were able to catch up with each other after the previous 2 years of COVID-19.

The first session kicked off with three great presentations from three well-known Australian parasitologists. A fascinating presentation given by the charismatic Dr Richard Bradbury (Federation University) on basic (yet tricky) microscopy of parasites, followed by an enlightening presentation of diagnosis of blood parasites presented by Francesca Azzato (VIDRL) and then Dr Harsha Sheorey (SVH) with some unique case studies to share with us.

Following on from these three presentations was a case study on *Echinococcus* sp. and *Helicobacter pylori* presented by Mikayla Kingston (NPV) and to round out the first session of CliniCon Robert Norton (Path Qld) gave a presentation on 'Burkholderia pseudomallei – laboratory identification in the MALDI-TOF era and safety'.

At the afternoon tea intermission many delegates were catching the speakers from the first session to ask further questions while juggling a drink and biscuit.

The second session of CliniCon commenced with talks on Mycobacterium, where Maria Globan (VIDRL), Caroline Lavender (VIDRL) and Taryn Crighton (NSW Path) gave in-depth informative presentations around identification, susceptibility testing and Buruli ulcers.

The second session was rounded out with presentations on 'Neisseria gonorrhoeae – the rise of the susceptible clones' from Ella Trembizki (UQCCR) and the final presentation for the day was by Dazhi Jin (HMC), discussing the development of a novel multiple cross displacement amplification assay for *Clostridium difficile* as a point of care test.

Delegates were then delighted to have the opportunity to network once again at the welcome function held in the trade hall with the trade participants. There were many happy faces catching up over food and drinks and updating each other on the past 2 COVID years.

The second day commenced with a session dedicated to the area of mycology, where Charlotte Webster (NSW Path) and Evanthia Tambosis (NSW Path) led us through the world of fungi; however, in reality, they only touched the surface of mycology. They laid down foundations for the rest of us to help with identification of some of the simpler fungi.

Following morning tea on day two we were enlightened by three comprehensive presentations. The first presentation was on Monkeypox by Linda Hueston (NSW Path), followed by a presentation by Shane Byrne (S&N Path) with his experience navigating COVID-19 and the challenges of testing from the laboratory perspective – wow, what a crazy roller coaster ride that was, and I'm sure many other laboratories around Australia had similar experiences.

Continuing on with the COVID-19 theme, Wayne Dimitch (NRL) then updated delegates on their evaluation of COVID serology kits available in Australia and their performance. Finally, Rickyle Balea (USC) completed the session before the lunch break with a brief presentation of his work on the detection of Zika virus using rapid isothermal tests as an alternative to RT-PCR.

The closing session of CliniCon 2022 commenced with Tony Jennings (S&N Path) who discussed and highlighted the issues and current challenges within the clinical pathology industry, a topic many delegates could relate to.

Derek Holzhauser (RCPA) informed delegates on the reasonably new area for diagnostic microbiology laboratories on digital microscopy in the clinical and diagnostic microbiology laboratory. Will this be the way of the future?

Jacob Tickner (UQ) gave a short presentation on rapid molecular diagnostics for drug-resistant *Salmonella typhi*, followed by Emma Sweeney (UQ) presenting on individualised treatment of *Mycoplasma genitalium* infections. The final speaker was Christopher McIver (SGH), who presented on the elusiveness and significance of clinical isolates of cysteine requiring *Escherichia coli*.

The ASM thanks all those involved in making the meeting a huge success. And a special thanks are given to the speakers, session chairs and delegates. Our goal was to create a more-specific clinical-based meeting and networking forum. We hope the meeting was informative and looking forward to seeing you at our next CliniCon meeting in Perth in 2023!