



## ANU COVID-19 PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

### NEWSLETTER

Edition #2  
October 2021

Dear Readers,

As we approach the 6-month anniversary of the establishment of the ANU COVID-19 Peer Support Program (16th November), in this edition we reflect on our progress, accomplishments and journey into the future, while highlighting some upcoming webinars and project launches. The activity during the last 6 months has manifested in a resourceful global support network with so much to offer. Moving toward the end of 2021, it is exciting to think of the opportunities and potential we have to continue this.

On behalf of our team, thank you for your engagement with the program and we look forward to our future together.

Kind Regards,  
Morrison Davies (Editor, First Year Medical Student)

*Morrison Davies*

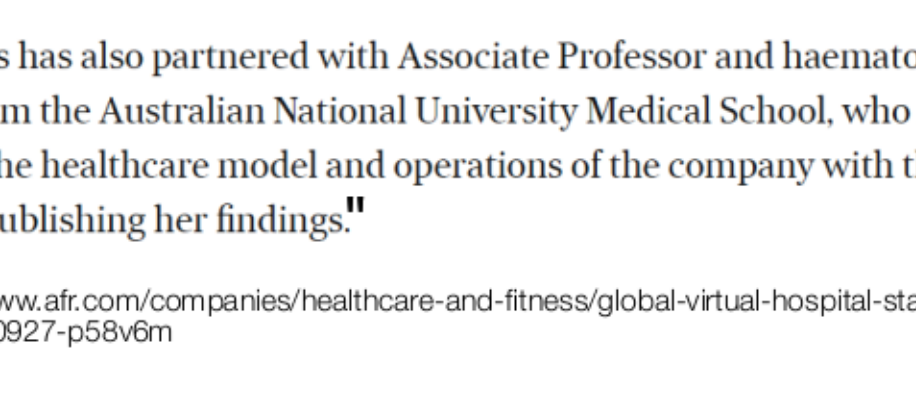
Please circulate this Newsletter forward!

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[international.health@anu.edu.au](mailto:international.health@anu.edu.au)



Cover page photo by Ashkan Forouzani on Unsplash

Our online resources have been accessed by 2300+ people from 38 countries!



A snapshot of the global reach of the program

Our website has had 11,000+ page views!

## OUR EVOLUTION

During **May** and early **June**, a two member core volunteer team developed infrastructure to meet the objectives of building virtual support networks between Australian health professionals and our colleagues in India, with a focus on clinical, educational, research and peer support.

This culminated in a live website, a request support portal, a volunteer recruitment portal and the weekly webinar series.

Our volunteer network has grown to include 220+ Medical students and Health Professionals with diverse clinical backgrounds in infectious diseases, intensive care, radiology, nephrology, cardiology, general practice, psychiatry and public health.

The progress and reach of the program has been entirely driven by the work of volunteers.

Thanks to funding from ANU in **August** and our first corporate sponsor the sponsorship in **September**, we can now direct finances towards resources and increase the capacity of this program.

Our resources are being accessed by an expanding global audience. By the end of September, we have:

- > Recorded 4500+ website views with users from 39 countries
- > Held 16 webinars with 850+ attendees
- > Developed 2 research collaborations



## Research Collaboration: Global Medics Australia

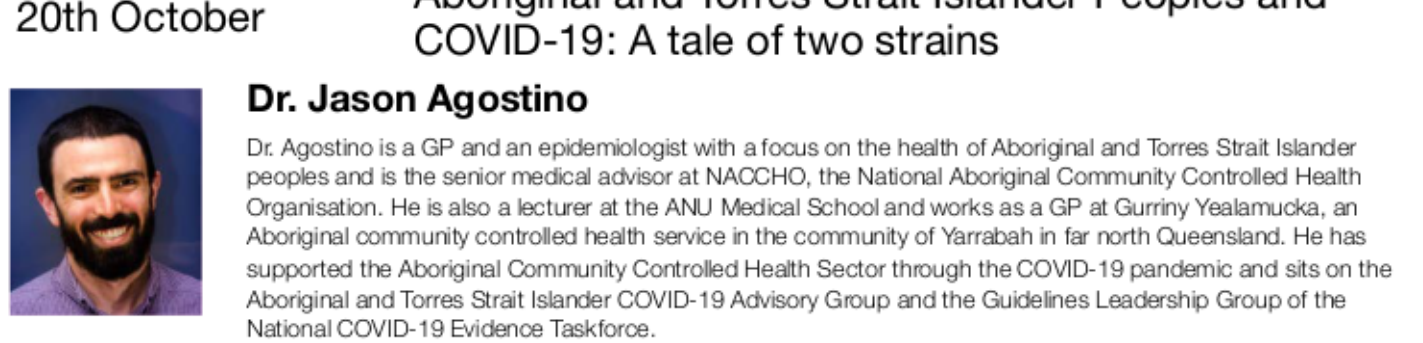
Global Medics Australia is a virtual hospital startup that aims to help remote COVID-19 patients around the globe get access to Medical consultations and ongoing monitoring.

- > Global Medics Australia has produced a telemedicine platform used to provide digital healthcare to remote patients
- > The ANU COVID-19 Peer Support Program is researching the operations of the company and digital healthcare model
- > Findings are intended for publication

"Global Medics has also partnered with Associate Professor and haematologist Dipti Talaulikar from the Australian National University Medical School, who is researching the healthcare model and operations of the company with the intention of publishing her findings."

Insert from: <https://www.afr.com/companies/healthcare-and-fitness/global-virtual-hospital-start-up-tackles-covid-remotely-20210927-p58v6m>

## OUR FUTURE



The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruptions to the education and training of Medical students and limited their opportunity to interact and seek support from peers and teaching staff. Led by Dr Sutarsa Nyoman and supported by a team of Medical student volunteers, the '*Link & Share*' project aims to provide opportunities for medical students to come together, support each other, and bring change.

The project hopes to bring together

**Medical students** from across the globe to:

- > Connect and share experiences and stories through
- > Engage in meaningful discussions with peers and experts
- > Create platforms to provide peer support
- > Foster student-led innovative global initiatives

To facilitate this, there are exciting plans for the commencement of:

- > Link and Share webinar series
- > Interviews where health professionals share insights
- > Student networking virtual events

**This project plans to go live in November, so watch this space! For more information, or to become a volunteer, please visit:**  
<https://medicalschoollanu.edu.au/connect/anu-covid-19-peer-support-program/link-share>

## Over the next few months we are adapting to a post-COVID phase of the program.

As vaccination rates increase, from October onward we anticipate the need for COVID related support and education to decrease. This shift in the pandemic guides the ANU COVID-19 Peer Support Program towards a post COVID phase, where we harness engagement to continue building international collaborations and global support networks with broader interests.

- > Broader topics for webinars, research and collaboration
- > Workshops and hybrid education models
- > Women's interprofessional support group, focusing on leadership and mentorship development
- > Targeted educational and support programs for specific groups (eg. Nursing & Medical students)

**"...It's been a real honour supporting you all... I learnt so much through my session and the many others that you have conducted so far... This may turn out to be one of the best and richest resources internationally that future medics can access related to what we've learnt from COVID-19..."** - Webinar Speaker

**"...Since joining the program I have had the privilege to work alongside incredibly inspiring and talented people... I am surrounded by leaders and mentors who encourage me to learn and broaden my skill set... After hosting an international webinar, I leave feeling inspired and energised... I am proud of the impact and work that the program has achieved and very excited for what's to come..."** - Bridget Nielsen, Webinar Management Volunteer

## UPCOMING WEBINARS (2021)

Venue: Live Online Event

Time: Wednesdays 7.30pm AEDT/2:00pm IST

### 13th October COVID-19 Home-based Care & Monitoring

**Dr. Neeraj Nischal**

Dr. Neeraj Nischal is an Additional Professor in Medicine at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi, India. He has a special interest in infectious diseases. He has been at the forefront of COVID patient management and resource development for the country since the start of the pandemic.

### 20th October Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and COVID-19: A tale of two strains

**Dr. Jason Agostino**

Dr. Agostino is a GP and an epidemiologist with a focus on the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and is the senior medical advisor at NACCHO, the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation. He is also a lecturer at the ANU Medical School and works as a GP at Gurney Yealamucka, an Aboriginal community controlled health service in the community of Yarrabah in far north Queensland. He has supported the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Sector through the COVID-19 pandemic and sits on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander COVID-19 Advisory Group and the Guidelines Leadership Group of the National COVID-19 Evidence Taskforce.

### 27th October Challenges in Delivering Healthcare During the COVID Pandemic: The Apollo experience

**Dr. Rohini Sridhar**

Dr. Sridhar is a pathologist who trained at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences followed by FRCPA in Haematology. She oversees the clinical services of the 40 hospitals in the Apollo Hospital Group focusing on clinical quality and clinical governance. During the Covid Pandemic, she spearheaded the vaccination drive completing over 500,000 vaccinations in 4 months across 200 vaccination centres making it the largest private vaccination drive in India.

Register Webinar Attendance Here:

<https://medicalschoollanu.edu.au/connect/anu-covid-19-peer-support-program/covid-19-international-peer-support-program-webinar-series>

## WEBINAR HIGHLIGHT: SPECIAL GUEST

### Navigating Through Pandemonium: Reflections on the Indian Response to the Pandemic



\*Pictured are Padma Shree Dr. Raman Gangakhedkar (Speaker), Devashi Palwal (Webinar Host), Jay Poria (International Relations Manager, ANU) and Dipti Talaulikar (Program Leader)

### His Excellency Ambassador Mr. Manpreet Vohra

Ambassador Vohra is currently the High Commissioner of India to Australia. He has a BA in Economics and a Post-Graduate Diploma in International Trade from Panjab University, Chandigarh. He was also a Chevening Scholar at Oxford University in 1999-2000 where he obtained a Certificate in Diplomatic Studies.

### Padma Shree Dr. Raman Gangakhedkar

Dr. Raman Gangakhedkar is an epidemiologist, previous Head Scientist of Epidemiology and Communicable Diseases at the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), and the previous Director of the Indian National Institute of Virology. Both institutions were at the forefront of crafting and implementing India's COVID strategy. He is famously described as having been the face of ICMR in India during the pandemic last year.

Watch it here: [www.medicalschoollanu.edu.au/news-events/events/navigating-through-pandemonium-reflections-indian-response-pandemic](http://www.medicalschoollanu.edu.au/news-events/events/navigating-through-pandemonium-reflections-indian-response-pandemic)

## THEMED WEBINARS: DIAGNOSIS

### Chest Imaging Findings in COVID-19 Pneumonitis



Dr. Nicola Schembri shares her first-hand experience of diagnosing UK-based COVID-19 pneumonitis cases on chest CT and discusses typical acute image findings, early and long-term chest complications of COVID-19 infection and the correlation of disease extent with prediction of critical illness and the need for mechanical ventilation.

\*Pictured are Dr. Nicola Schembri (Speaker), Dr. Raju Kalidindi (Speaker), Devashi Palwal (Webinar Host), Jay Poria (International Relations Manager, ANU) and Dipti Talaulikar (Program Leader)

### Diagnosis and Characterisation of SARS-COVID-19



Professor William Rawlinson discusses the use of Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) and other novel diagnostics such as sample pooling, reflex testing using WGS, and workflow changes in the assessment of emerging SARS-CoV-2 Variants of Concern (VOC) mutations, along with WGS assessment of quality and how mutations can affect primer binding.

\*Pictured are Professor William Rawlinson (Speaker), Bridget Nielsen (Webinar Host), Devashi Palwal and Evangeline Wong (Webinar Support) and Dipti Talaulikar (Program Leader)

Watch it Here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=50MaF\\_FH174](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=50MaF_FH174)

Watch it Here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jKtYk5DaCc>

## OUR TEAM

### Program Leader

Dr. Dipti Talaulikar (Associate Professor, ANU; Senior Staff Specialist, Canberra Health Services)

### Webinar Management

Devashi Palwal (Second Year ANU Medical Student)  
Evangeline Wong (Third Year ANU Medical Student)  
Bridget Nielsen (First Year ANU Medical Student)

### Monitoring & Evaluation

Dr. Sutarsa Nyoman (Lecturer, ANU Medical School)  
Zalak Desai (Oral Health Therapist)  
Riya Patel (Oral Health Therapist)  
Morrison Davies (First Year Medical Student)

### Social Media & Graphics

Upasana Pathak (Third Year ANU Medical Student)  
Michelle Ting (Second Year Bond University Medical Student)

### Educational Resources

Hannah Greig (Second Year ANU Medical Student)

### Partnerships

Esabelle Yam (Partnership Specialist, ANU)

### Funding & Sponsorships

Naresh Khanna (Community Volunteer)

## CONTACT US

For more information about volunteering or becoming a corporate sponsor, please contact us:



The ANU COVID-19 Peer Support Program acknowledges, celebrates and pays our respects to the Ngunawal and Ngambri people of the Canberra region and to all First Nations Australians on whose traditional lands we meet and work, and whose cultures are among the oldest continuing cultures in human history.

### Website

[www.medicalschoollanu.edu.au/connect/anu-covid-19-peer-support-program](http://www.medicalschoollanu.edu.au/connect/anu-covid-19-peer-support-program)

### Email

[international.health@anu.edu.au](mailto:international.health@anu.edu.au)

### Webinar Series

[www.medicalschoollanu.edu.au/connect/anu-covid-19-peer-support-program](http://www.medicalschoollanu.edu.au/connect/anu-covid-19-peer-support-program)

### Link & Share

[www.medicalschoollanu.edu.au/connect/anu-covid-19-peer-support-program/link-share](http://www.medicalschoollanu.edu.au/connect/anu-covid-19-peer-support-program/link-share)



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