
MELBOURNE OPEN FORUM: MARCH 2008

The next meeting to be hosted by the ASTN will be an Open Forum at the Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre on Sunday 30 March from 9:00 am to 12 noon. The program will feature an update by Professor Lyle Palmer on genomics and pharmacogenomics in sleep conditions and how genomics can be included in clinical trials. New proposals for investigator-initiated sleep health clinical trials will also be presented and discussed.

Registrations are welcome from anyone in the sleep research community and there is no charge for this meeting. There are two ways to register. If you will be attending the 2008 Annual Scientific Meeting of the Thoracic Society of Australia & New Zealand (TSANZ), you can register by ticking the satellite symposium ASTN Open Forum on your TSANZ registration form. If you would like to come to the Open Forum but won't be a delegate at the TSANZ meeting, just send an email to Melanie Harris (melanie.harris@rgh.sa.gov.au) asking to be registered.

EXPERTS IN LARGE-SCALE TRIALS SPEAK AT *worldsleep07*

In September a large audience attended the ASTN symposium discussion at *worldsleep07* in Cairns, to hear a panel of international experts speak about multicentre clinical trials in sleep disorders.

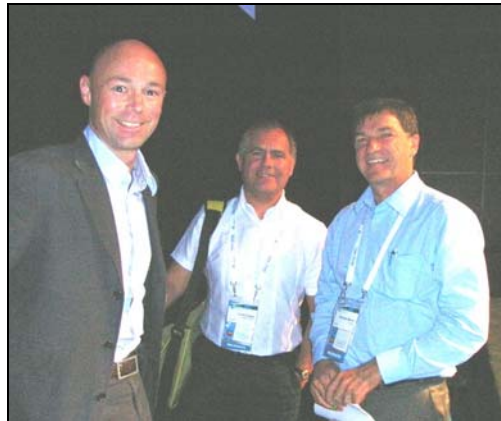
For the first part of the symposium, ASTN Chief Investigator Doug McEvoy drew on discussions at the lead-up International Sleep and Breathing Meeting at Palm Cove to provide an overview of issues for large-scale trials in obstructive sleep apnea. This sparked a wide-ranging discussion with contributions from Jan Hedner, Craig Anderson, Stuart Quan, Doug Bradley, Terri Weaver and Gianfranco Parati.

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The second part of the symposium, focusing on large-scale trials in insomnia, opened with a very comprehensive overview by Charles Morin with follow-up discussion from Colin Espie, Nick Glozier and Thomas Roth.

Doug McEvoy and Charles Morin have kindly provided their overview slides for viewing on the ASTN website at www.sleeptrials.net/recent_events.htm



Nick Glozier, Colin Espie and Charles Morin continue discussions after the ASTN-hosted session at *worldsleep07*.



Terri Weaver and Doug Bradley, panellists at the ASTN-hosted session at *worldsleep07*.

CLINICAL TRIALS IN DEVELOPMENT

Investigator groups in various fields of sleep health are currently developing trials in association with the ASTN. These include obesity hypoventilation syndrome, insomnia, shift work, and paediatrics. Two of these developing trials are featured below, with contact details for other trials available via Melanie Harris (melanie.harris@rgh.sa.gov.au).

Planned trial in obesity hypoventilation syndrome

An ASTN workshop in early 2007 identified a number of trials which could be conducted cooperatively in the field of nocturnal respiratory failure and non-invasive ventilation. From these, a trial to evaluate positive airway pressure therapy alternatives for obesity hypoventilation syndrome was prioritised and several calls were made for research teams interested in joining the study. The resulting investigator group developed a protocol, with assistance from ASTN biostatistics and health economics consultants, which received endorsement via the ASTN Research Committee.

A growing investigator group is now examining laboratory requirements at study sites and further refining the protocol. The group is on track to make a funding application to the NHMRC in 2008.

If you would like to know more about this study, please contact the Chair of the Non-Invasive Ventilation Steering Group, Amanda Piper on (02) 9515 8708 or email ajp@mail.med.usyd.edu.au.

Planned trial in insomnia

In July this year, the ASTN hosted a workshop to begin the development of a small number of important and feasible multicentre trials in the field of insomnia. Led by Simon Smith with Leon Lack, Delwyn Bartlett, Gerard Kennedy and Christopher Worsnop as other participants, the group prioritised three study ideas. These were:

1. a trial of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) variants for insomnia
2. a trial of an intervention targeting psychologists to improve practice in treatment of insomnia
3. a trial of CBT treatment for insomnia alongside CPAP for comorbid patients

The group judged that the field had capacity to focus on one study initially, and the trial of CBT for insomnia alongside CPAP for comorbid patients was selected for further development.

After calls for interested research teams, groups from Queensland, WA, SA and Victoria are currently assisting with development of the protocol with the aim of submitting an NHMRC application in February 2008.

If you would like to know more about joining this study, please contact Leon Lack on (08) 8201 2391 or email leon.lack@flinders.edu.au.

SHANTHA RAJARATNAM JOINS ASTN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



The ASTN Executive Committee is made up of the Chief Investigators and one or more sleep researchers who are appointed for 12-month periods. Dr Shantha Rajaratnam of the School of Psychology, Psychiatry and Psychological Medicine at Monash University is a researcher recently appointed to the Committee. Shantha's research interests include circadian rhythms and the effects of melatonin and light, evaluation of fatigue management programs for shift workers, consequences of sleep loss and sleep disruption, and legal issues relating to sleep loss and fatigue. He is keen to hear from researchers interested in setting up multicentre clinical trials in any of these areas.

ASSESSMENT OF SPONSORED TRIALS ARM FOR THE ASTN

Funding for the establishment and first 5 years of the ASTN is covered by an NHMRC Enabling Grant which began in 2005. The ASTN Executive is looking at ways to extend the life of the ASTN beyond 2010 so that assistance and infrastructure continue to support investigator-initiated sleep health clinical trials in our region. One possible source of partial funding is a separate ASTN arm for industry-sponsored trials which would serve as a central focus for both industry and research sites, with up-to-date information on the capacities of research sites and resources for common site activities such as ethics applications and subject recruitment. This possibility will be assessed through a survey of research centres. We also welcome comment from researchers and industry representatives to Melanie Harris (melanie.harris@rgh.sa.gov.au).