



Australian Government

National Health and
Medical Research Council

N H M R C

Date: Tuesday 2 June 2009

MEDIA RELEASE

Filling gaps in bowel disease: Sydney gastroenterologist receives prestigious NICS Fellowship

Protecting people with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) from life threatening infection is the goal of Dr Alissa Walsh, who has just received a NICS Fellowship from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and funding partner, the Gastroenterological Society of Australia (GESA).

Dr Walsh is a consultant gastroenterologist from St Vincent's Hospital and St George Clinical School in Sydney. She will use the NICS-GESA Fellowship to undertake a two-year implementation project to address an important evidence-practice gap in the management of IBD.

"IBD is primarily a disease of young adults which can cause debilitating inflammation of the bowel. Medications effectively manage symptoms but they can also suppress general immunity. This encourages opportunistic infections which are hard to detect and potentially fatal. While immunisation provides protection against these infections, people with IBD are not routinely screened or offered immunisation. This is the gap I'm going to address through my NICS Fellowship," explained Dr Walsh.

NHMRC Chief Executive Officer, Professor Warwick Anderson has welcomed this opportunity. "We congratulate Dr Walsh on her NICS-GESA Fellowship. Her project will help identify and protect people at risk and provide improved guidance on preventive measures to all clinicians working in this area."

Dr Walsh will join five other health professionals from Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales as 2009 NICS Fellows.

Release ends.

Interviews: Meredith Cameron, T: 03 8866 0409 M: 0409 383 152 meredith.cameron@nhmrc.gov.au

For more information about the other NICS Fellows and the NICS Leadership Program:
www.nhmrc.gov.au/nics

Note to editors

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is Australia's peak body for supporting health and medical research. As part of the NHMRC, the National Institute of Clinical Studies (NICS) works to improve health care by getting health and medical research into practice.

The NICS Leadership program, which was launched in 2003, directly contributes to closing evidence-practice gaps by supporting health professionals to undertake practical projects that aim to improve health outcomes for people by getting high quality evidence into everyday clinical practice in particular health settings.

WORKING TO BUILD A HEALTHY AUSTRALIA

www.nhmrc.gov.au/nics

GPO Box 4530, Melbourne VIC 3001

Fawkner Centre, Level 5, 499 St Kilda Road, Melbourne VIC 3004

T. +61 3 8866 0400 F. +61 3 8866 0499 E. nics@nhmrc.gov.au

ABN 88 601 010 284

The two-year, part-time Fellowships are open to early-to-mid career health professionals across the health care spectrum, including doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, paramedics, health care managers, and policy makers.

The Fellowships provide an annual stipend as well as professional development opportunities, training programs in evidence implementation, mentorship, and opportunities to network with and learn from world-class experts who come to Australia as part of NICS' Visiting Experts program.

Gastroenterological Society of Australia (GESA)

The Gastroenterological Society of Australia is the peak body for the discipline of gastroenterology and hepatology in this country, with over 1100 members comprising medical graduates, scientists and trainees. For more information: www.gesa.org.au

Applications for NICS Fellowships 2010 open in July 2009.