



## Media release

Thursday 26 March 2020

[FECRI announces appointment of Research Fellow for new Breast cancer program.](#)

Fiona Elsey Cancer Research Institute has appointed Dr Aparna Jayachandran as Senior Research Fellow to lead a new Breast cancer program at the Ballarat Institute. This an encouraging extension of the world class research currently undertaken at FECRI in the role of immune cells and cancer.

This appointment was made possible because of seed funding from private philanthropic donation and February's Ballarat Cycle Classic that raised a record \$300,000 for this project.

Breast cancer is one of the most common cancers in women with 20,000 new cases diagnosed in Australia each year. It is the second most common cause of cancer related deaths in women with over 3,100 deaths per year.

Commencing this month, Dr Jayachandran's research will investigate the immunology of breast cancer with special reference to high risk triple negative breast cancer. This research aims to determine protein targets on breast cancer cells that may be involved in evading the immune system, by creating a camouflaging "fog" around these cells. It is hoped that by identifying these proteins, druggable targets can be developed that would "lift the fog" from these cells and allow the immune system to attack the cancer. This work is currently being undertaken at the Institute with other cancers such as, Chronic lymphocytic leukaemia (CLL) and Ovarian cancer.

Triple negative breast cancer accounts for 15% of all breast cancers.

Dr Jayachandran is an internationally recognised cancer researcher, with her most recent appointment as the Head of the Liver Cancer Unit at the Gallipoli Medical Research Institute at the University of Queensland.

She has also held appointments at the Liebig University, Germany and Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York, University of Melbourne, Latrobe University, and the Olivia Newton John Cancer Research Institute.

Institute Director, Professor George Kannourakis said "We are so pleased to welcome Dr Jayachandran to our already talented team and to Ballarat. Her background and expertise in cancer biology, epithelial-to-mesenchymal transition, cancer stem cells, and organ fibrosis is an asset to this work."

"The Institute is well placed to do this research and it is an expansion to the ground-breaking work that the team here at the Institute is doing into the immunology of cancer. It is only through research that we can improve the outcomes for patients with cancer. Our program is building great momentum and will continue to produce outcomes." Said Professor Kannourakis.

Dr Aparna Jayachandran said “I am extremely delighted to have been chosen to lead the Breast Cancer Program at FECRI. I am looking forward to working closely with the teams outstanding group of cancer researchers and oncologists. I am excited and very keen to collaborate with both internal and external stakeholders to deliver the desired outcomes which will help our community.”

FECRI currently has 8 PhD students from Federation University and 13 senior scientific staff. The program is community funded and the only cancer research Institute in regional Australia. The breast cancer project joins the other projects that will continue at the Institute including:

- Ovarian cancer.
- Chronic lymphthetic leukaemia
- Histiocytic disorders.
- Immune studies into the biology of various cancer and leukaemias.

The Institute is well placed to undertake research into the immunology of breast cancer with special reference to high risk breast cancers, such as triple negative breast cancer.

***All media enquiries, please contact Sarah Stapleton- Marketing and Fundraising Manager at FECRI on 0475 383 687 or sarah@fecri.org.au***

***Please tag the Institute on all social media using @fionaelseycr***