

Trials and Tribulations – Working Towards Sustainable Solutions for Investigator Driven Clinical Trials

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The need for patient samples

- Clinical trials are the cornerstone of translational research and investigator-driven biomedical studies provide an invaluable contribution.
- Biomedical studies require access to patient tissue
- Labour costs to access tissue are substantial for pathology providers already dealing with high volume work.
- Rising costs hinder clinicians' and cooperative groups' attempts to conduct trials



An unfavorable operational shift

- Many trials units rely on funded studies and altruism to subsidise unfunded studies.
 - Increasing service fees forced many trial units to discontinue this approach, leading to declining numbers of investigator driven studies.
- Our goal was to alleviate workloads of routine pathology providers and enable investigator driven trials

Our Sustainable Approach to Clinical Trial Service Provision

Hunter Cancer Biobank (HCB) manages and provides;

- Collections of FFPE, frozen tissue and serial bloods
- Archival and multicentre tissue collections
- Clinical trial provision and protocol driven collections
- IHC, TMA and histopathological validation services

HCB is working towards sustainability by 2023, supported by NSW Health Pathology – Hunter (NSWHPH). HCB operates as the research partner of the core diagnostic anatomical pathology laboratory.

With support from Hunter Cancer Research Alliance (HCRA) and the Clinical Cancer Research Network (CCRN), the clinical community drove this partnership leading to a new model of service provision aligned to the strategic plans of NSWHPH.

A Robin Hood Paradigm



Avoiding duplications in expenditure for dedicated research staff, enables biobanks to offer subsidised services for investigator driven studies while adhering to the statewide billing schedule for all sponsored studies.

A New Alliance for Clinical Trials Service Provision

The establishment of the trials alliance has:

- **Increased investigator driven studies** to 48% of actively recruiting studies (N=36).
- Provided a **sustainable income** for HCB
- **Galvanised the NSWHPH commitment to supporting research in the Hunter.**

We aim to increase rates of investigator driven research that will correlate to **increased translational research and an overall improvement in outcomes for Hunter patients.**

