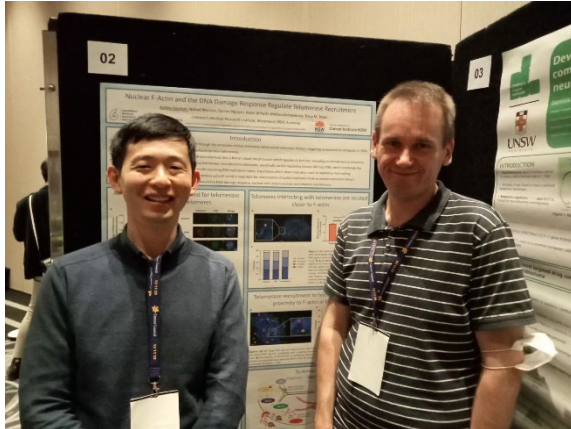


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**Position & Affiliation:** Research Officer (ECR) at the Children's Medical Research Institute<sup>1</sup>

**Full Reference:** Robert Lu, Alexander P Sobinoff, Christopher B Nelson, Hilda A Pickett. *Distinct modes of telomere synthesis and mitotic telomere lengthening in cancers engaging in Alternative Lengthening of Telomeres*

**Presentation Type:** Oral



Meeting a collaborator in front of their poster to discuss their project and exchanging experimental advice

I was privileged to present my research as I received valuable feedback from other academics/researchers who were experts in DNA-damage repair in cancers. In particular, question time provided valuable feedback to further refine my experiments for successful publication. In addition, being able to present exposed me to the requirements and future work for translating my research findings into potential therapies for treating ALT cancers. Being able to meet many talented and a broad range of research areas was invaluable for updating my perspective on cancer treatment approaches on pancreatic and glioblastoma/neuroblastoma cancer types which highly overlap with my research on telomere maintenance in ALT cancers. As such, this overlap allowed me to meet with such researchers through exchanging ideas on their research and expertise

with 3D-matrix and animal models. This is expected to further my professional development by opening up collaboration opportunities and employment opportunities in a new lab which I'm currently seeking.

The NSW Cancer Conference was of particular benefit for me in providing an eye-opening workshop as to how to integrate consumers into research. As that is an area I neglected during my PhD, the fact that we were meet consumers, was essential to dispel the myth that it was "pointless" to engage consumers in the context of "basic research". To paraphrase, several consumers argued being able to communicate the process of basic research is just as important to facilitate the appreciation and contribution despite the knowledge that "basic research" typically have a long timeline for translational benefit to be realised. In the near future I will engage with Cancer Voices NSW which represents cancer consumers to find the most appropriate consumers for successful grant application.

A great take-home message was about inequality of cancer survivorship and need to address this for cancer treatment and diagnosis, especially in Africa and First Nations people. Relating to this was an interesting talk by Professor Karen Canfell was on the apparent "minimal impact" of the COVID19 pandemic on cancer diagnosis and deaths and argued that it may be too soon to see potential negative consequences due to impaired surveillance due to COVID-restrictions/controls.