

Name: Chloe Jennett

Position & Affiliation: PhD Student, The Daffodil Centre, The University of Sydney, A Joint Venture with Cancer Council NSW, New South Wales, Australia.

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Conference/Meeting Name: The Cancer & Primary Care Research Network (Ca-PRI)

Location Melbourne, VIC, Australia

Dates: 17th – 19th April 2024

Presentation Type Oral



Image: Presenting the background slide for my presentation in front of a full house.

In mid-April, I had the privilege of attending the Cancer & Primary Care Research Network (Ca-PRI) conference hosted by Professor Jon Emery and the PC4 group in Melbourne. It marked the first Ca-PRI conference in the southern hemisphere and stood as the largest yet, with over 200 delegates from researchers, policymakers, and clinicians representing 60 countries.

The conference commenced on Wednesday the 17th with a plenary session titled “Visions of the role of primary care in cancer control,” featuring insights from Professor Dorothy Keefe, CEO of Cancer Australia, regarding the development of the first national Australian Cancer Plan. During the opening

ceremony, I was pleased to hear from the Hon. Mary-Anne Thomas, Victorian Minister for Health, who expressed enthusiasm for the role of self-collection in promoting equity and increasing participation in Australia's National Cervical Screening Program. As cervical screening and self-collection are central themes of my PhD thesis, witnessing policymakers' dedication to optimal implementation was encouraging. Minister Thomas shared anecdotes of self-collection availability for parliament members during their workday, setting a fitting tone for a conference centered on translational research and equity in cancer care.

On the first day, I co-chaired the morning session on Policy and Guidelines alongside Doctor Javiera Martinez-Gutierrez from the University of Melbourne. The session featured a diverse range of talks, with a highlight being the latest research on the implementation of lung cancer screening (particularly relevant with Australia's imminent national program)!

On the second day, I kicked off my morning with a trip to Lune Croissants, arriving 20 minutes before the shop opened to secure the 12th spot in line (worth it!). Following this, I presented findings from a survey conducted as part of my PhD, assessing healthcare providers' knowledge, acceptability, and adoption of self-collection for cervical screening into routine clinical practice. With only 3 minutes on the clock, I was relieved to get through all my content on time, with an additional 2 minutes provided to tackle 3 audience questions.

One presentation that particularly piqued my interest, and I believe would be of interest to the wider Sydney Cancer Partners community, was a methodology I had not previously used: concept mapping. Ms. Kimberly Devotta from the University of Toronto presented work on understanding the uptake of cervical screening among South Asian women in Ontario. I am eager to observe how their research team utilizes this approach to guide action planning and program development to address barriers of cervical screening among this group. It is certainly a methodology I'd be interested to use in the future.

Ca-PRI was the first conference I attended without my PhD supervisors. I found that a key skill I took away from the conference was the ability to network with current and potential collaborators, even without the presence of a more senior team member to lean on. Collaboration is a fundamental aspect of building an academic career, and this experience provided a great opportunity for me to step outside of my comfort zone. Thank you, Sydney Cancer Partners, for providing me with this opportunity.