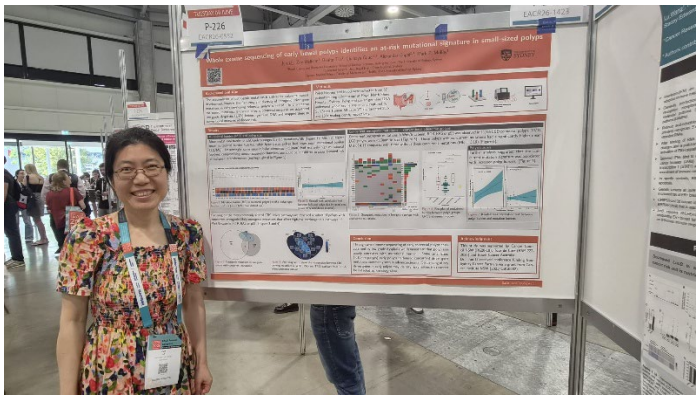
Name: Jun Li
Position & Affiliation: Research fellow, University of Sydney
Full Reference: **Jun Li**, Zoe Welham, Benita Tse, Chahaya Gauci, Alexander Engel and Mark P. Molloy. *Whole exome sequencing of early bowel polyps identifies an at-risk mutational signature in small-sized polyps.*
Conference/Meeting Name: European Association for Cancer Research (EACR) 2026 Congress
Location: Budapest, Hungary
Dates: 8-11 June 2026
Presentation Type: poster



Me standing next to my poster at EACR.

Over 2400 participants from over 70 countries attended European Association for Cancer Research 2026 Congress, which was held at Hungexpo Congress and Exhibition Centre in Budapest. The main theme of EACR 2026 is innovative cancer science, focusing on advancing basic, preclinical and translational cancer research by connecting cancer research communities together.

One interesting talk on cancer initiation drew my attention. Philip Jones' team (University of Cambridge) published a new 3D epithelioid culture model from normal murine and human esophageal epithelium, which is self-maintained, has high amplification potential, and is able to keep genomic stability for at least 12 months (allows long term experiments). Normal esophageal epithelium was retrieved and excised into pieces, then placed on membrane inserts(explants) and cultured in cFAD medium. Once the cells reach confluence, explants can be removed. The confluent epithelioid can be maintained in medium for up to 12 months. This model is much cheaper compared to expensive organoids culture. The normal esophageal epithelioids can be used in CRISPR screening and inhibitor treatment to study the dynamic cell fitness in cancer initiation stage and how anti-cancer treatments modulate the competition between mutant and wildtype cells. There's potential for this method to be used in other type of epithelia.

Also we met a group from Sweden and one of PhD students was very interested in our study. She would like to come to our lab under the exchange scheme of her university and to do some Laser-capture microdissection from the FFPE slides, subsequently proteomics work on colorectal polyps. It's exciting to see the collaboration growing. It's also a pleasure to contribute to the research journey of young scientist.