



Making waves

By Catherine Lewis

Peninsula Living sat down with some of the area's most innovative medical changemakers to understand the crucial work they are doing to improve local medicine – and our lives – over the coming years.



**PROFESSOR PAUL GLARE,
CHAIR OF PAIN MEDICINE
SPECIALIST PHYSICIAN IN PAIN
MEDICINE | ROYAL NORTH SHORE
HOSPITAL**

Professor Paul Glare can pinpoint the moment he decided to enter pain medicine.

"I had a wonderful mentor during my training who taught me that, although hospital treatment was technically excellent, there was a lot of suffering that could be better relieved."

That lesson laid the groundwork for over two decades working in palliative care in Australia and New York, prior to his current chapter at the University of Sydney and on the wards at Royal North

Shore Hospital (RNSH).

With chronic pain affecting one in five Australians, and only a 'small fraction' seeing a pain specialist, the father-of-two decided to take a fresh look at how to help. Enter a new wave of research into digital health technology co-designed with patients, which aims to lower dependence on medication.

"We think text messages can offer support that will help patients and their GP to better manage pain and reduce reliance on painkillers," Dr Glare explains.

It was this commitment to 'treating pain properly,' plus the training he and his 'second inspiration' – Professor Michael Cousins – gave to future doctors through the Faculty of Pain Medicine of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists, that inspired him to expand his reach.

He now sits on the council of the Hoc Mai Foundation, which has partnered with RNSH to help Vietnamese healthcare workers improve care across Vietnam.

"I'm also excited that a Ukrainian pain clinic has requested access to our digital health technology to help refugees who have chronic pain and limited access to services," he adds.



**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
SARAH GLASTRAS
STAFF SPECIALIST IN
ENDOCRINOLOGY AND SENIOR
RESEARCH | ROYAL NORTH SHORE
HOSPITAL AND THE NORTHERN
SYDNEY ENDOCRINE CENTRE**

"Enjoying the journey is always key to happiness," says Associate Professor Sarah Glastras, who describes her life as an endocrinologist as the 'perfect mix' between clinical medicine and research.

A 'fascination' with hormones, and the way they crosstalk to influence bodily functions, has been the cornerstone of her work, with a focus on diabetes, obesity, and pregnancy at Royal North Shore Hospital and the Northern Sydney

Endocrine Centre.

"My work has established maternal obesity as a contributor to the long-term risk of chronic kidney disease, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and obesity risk," explains Dr Glastras.

With diabetes being the fastest growing chronic disease in Australia, affecting almost 1.3 million, delving deep into the developmental origins of health and disease, as Dr Glastras is doing, is essential to progress.

"I would also like to understand the mechanisms of developmental programming - what happens in utero to influence a baby's metabolism and metabolic outcomes," she adds.



DR RIFAT CHAUDRY
PAEDIATRIC GENERAL, RESPIRATORY
AND SLEEP SPECIALIST | NORTHERN
BEACHES HOSPITAL

The doctor has long been a proponent of the importance of a good night's sleep to health and happiness and says 'sleep is crucial for every aspect of life'.

In line with this belief, Dr Chaudry recently led the development of a new Paediatric Sleep Service at Northern Beaches Hospital to investigate the causes behind sleep issues.

Sleep issues in children can be medical, such as obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA) or behavioural, such as night waking, and entire families are impacted.

Looking ahead, Dr Chaudry hopes to link specialist psychology elements to the service to achieve a holistic care goal.

Sleep medicine is a hot topic following a 2019 Australian Government inquiry

which revealed that four in 10 Australians were getting inadequate sleep.

Sleep, the inquiry said, must be recognised as the 'third pillar' of a healthy lifestyle alongside exercise and diet. It's a belief shared by Dr Chaudry, who hopes to encourage families across the Beaches and beyond to place a "strong emphasis on quality sleep for children's health and the wellbeing of the entire family."



DR ANTONIA PEARSON
MEDICAL ONCOLOGIST, ONCOLOGY
CLINICAL TRIALS LEAD | NORTHERN
BEACHES HOSPITAL

A desire to care for people during difficult times set Dr Antonia Pearson on the path to becoming one of our most innovative local oncologists. The mother-of-three is heading up the development of the first clinical trials at Northern Beaches Hospital, with the aim of providing Beaches-based cancer patients with access to the latest treatments on their doorstep.

"I enjoy working with each person to achieve the best outcome for them," she says.

Collaboration and community are crucial. With the Australian Government's Institute of Health and Welfare projecting that 162,163 people will be diagnosed with cancer across the country in 2022, the 'world-class cancer care' that Dr Pearson hopes to bring to the Beaches, is much needed.

"Trials take time and dedication, but even little increases in quality of life can make a huge difference," Dr Pearson adds. **P**

BE THE CHANGE
IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP



Founder Principal psychologist,
 Anita van Aken BSc Hons, MA.

Do you spend more time
questioning your partner's words
or actions than your own?

Relationships are challenging and require your focused attention. Increased or changing responsibilities impact relationship dynamics and in combination with stress can trigger strong emotions and unhelpful communication. All kinds of life events experienced by individuals can put pressure on relationships whether it be with intimate partners, family members, peers, or colleagues; it is not surprising that during these times communication can be more sensitive and emotionally reactive. Often, we automatically focus on the other person's shortcomings and once negative thinking sets in, we start making assumptions about what the other person may be feeling or thinking that may well be incorrect. Our communication style will reflect this and will add fuel to the fire.

Relationships need maintenance and sometimes we need professional coaching to understand how come a relationship 'feels' stuck. Don't leave your relationship check-up too late. You can attend relationships counselling on your own or with your partner/family member.

Strong Minds, Strong Relationships Pty Ltd is a psychology service offering individual, couple and family therapy.



STRONGMINDS
 STRONG RELATIONSHIPS PTY LTD

0410 678 898

Suite 33, 90, Mona Vale Rd, Mona Vale
www.strongrelationships.com.au