FACULTY SEMINAR
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The highs and lows of endometrial cancer risk

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Dr Amanda Spurdle is an NHMRC Senior Research Fellow and head of the Molecular Cancer Epidemiology Laboratory at the QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute. She began working in the field of molecular epidemiology of cancer at QIMR Berghofer in Brisbane in 2007.

Dr Spurdle’s research currently encompasses studies of breast, colorectal, prostate and endometrial cancer. Major research efforts include the clinical classification of sequence variants in high-risk familial cancer genes, and large-scale international collaborative efforts to identify common genetic variants associated with predisposition to and prognosis of cancers.

The genome-wide association study approach has identified multiple genetics variants underlying risk of common diseases. The application of this approach to cancer has revealed evidence for common aetiology of different hormone-related cancers, including examples provided by studies of endometrial cancer.

Results are providing insight into loci that act as cancer nexus regions, and have initiated a wave of functional studies of inter-genic regulatory regions. Complementary to studies of common genetic variation are studies assessing the role of high-risk genetic variants in cancer predisposition. There are numerous benefits to routine identification of the subset of cancer cases that carry a pathogenic mutation in known cancer syndrome genes.

This talk will present current results from research using the international Endometrial Cancer Association Consortium and the Australian population based endometrial cancer study, ANECS, and implications for future basic and clinical research efforts.