



Being the only specialist oncology service in Victoria, we are getting busy. As such, VACC is excited to introduce our new oncology intern!

Dr Melissa Hutchison obtained her Bachelor of Veterinary Science from the University of Melbourne. Mel worked at a mixed animal general practice in Woodend before starting her Oncology Internship in October 2014. Although Mel will not see initial referrals she will be available to help with the management and care of your clients and their pets. Her years of experience in private practice make her a real asset.

In her spare time Mel enjoys spending time with her fur babies, the extremely large black cat Elmo, crazy terrier cross Lexie and her cheeky thoroughbred Delphi.

## Latest News

Laura has just returned from the Veterinary Cancer Society (VCS) annual meeting in St Louis, USA. This is a cutting edge meeting where oncologists share their early research that is not yet published. This meeting is vital as we can gain access to new oncology information prior to its publication.

One of the main focuses this year was discussion of canine appropriate monoclonal antibodies (MAbs) for treating lymphoma. MAbs can have dual roles in tumour control, through both inhibition of their target protein on the tumour cell, as well as induction of an immune response via complement or antibody-dependent cellular cytotoxicity.

Two products have become conditionally licensed in the US for treatment of B cell (targeting CD20) and T cell (via CD52) lymphoma. Both are currently undergoing clinical trials in a variety of centres in the USA and early phase studies show that the product appears well tolerated. MAbs are used in combination with cytotoxic chemotherapy.

In people the addition of this treatment (i.e. Rituximab) to CHOP chemotherapy for patients with Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma has led to improved outcomes. This is very exciting for our canine patients' as we have had little improvements in median survival times for canine lymphoma over the last couple of decades.

These agents are unlikely to be available in Australia until 2015/16, however VACC is involved in their clinical experience program and will be enthusiastically encouraging their arrival in Australia!



## Case Report

We have just treated our first case of transmissible venereal tumour (TVT) at VACC! Cody is a three year old male cross breed (part Dingo).

Although it is rare to see TVTs in Victoria, Cody was originally from an aboriginal camp in Coober Pedy and spends time in both Melbourne and Coober Pedy.

Cody presented to his local clinic for bleeding from the prepuce. Examination revealed a large, friable multi-nodular mass at the base of the penis, along with several small satellite nodules.

A biopsy confirmed TVT and Cody was treated with 6 cycles of single agent vincristine chemotherapy.

TVT responds to many forms of therapy, however chemotherapy is the most effective. Surgery is limited by location, high recurrence rate and risk of tumour transplantation.

After two cycles he achieved a partial remission and at his 6<sup>th</sup> treatment he was very close to being in a complete remission (see photographs).

TVTs are interesting cancers as they can have horizontal transmission, typically during coitus, sniffing or licking.

In fact, TVT and Tassie Devil Facial tumour disease are the only naturally occurring clonally transmissible cancers that behave like an infectious parasitic neoplastic tissue graft.

TVTs are also unique in that they are one of few cancers that have durable responses to single agent chemotherapy, and for which multi-agent chemotherapy has not shown superior results.

Complete response rates to vincristine are >90-95%.

