

Media release

Greater adoption of interventional radiology in Australasia is needed to embrace patient-centered care

Wednesday 7 August 2024, Christchurch: Embolisation, despite its potential as a minimally invasive technique for a range of conditions, remains largely underutilised in Australia and New Zealand¹. The Interventional Radiology Society of Australasia (IRSA) and Interventional radiologists are determined to change this to improve patient care.

This was the key takeaway from the 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM), hosted by IRSA in Christchurch New Zealand from 5-7 August. Under the theme of 'Frontiers in Embolisation', global and local leaders in interventional radiology discussed cutting edge techniques and application of embolisation across a range of conditions, including uterine fibroids, prostate enlargement, liver tumours and knee arthritis.

Professor Jafar Golzarian, Professor of Radiology at the University of Minnesota and Founder and CEO of NorthStar Vascular and Interventional, said interventional radiology is a field of rapid innovation and it is important for Australasia to continue to lead these procedures and techniques.

"Embolisation can be used for conditions affecting nearly every area of a human body. Global advancements in embolisation are accelerating; however, not all geographies are adopting it at the same pace," said Professor Golzarian.

"It is great to have organisations, like IRSA, advocating for the value and expanded utilisation of embolisation. Strong knowledge of the various approaches of embolisation is a major success factor for safe practice. Learning opportunities created by the IRSA ASM are helping to ensure this knowledge is shared across borders."

Dr Chris Rogan, Interventional Radiologist and President of IRSA, believes that as leading experts in minimally invasive procedures like embolisation, Interventional Radiologists need to step up in educating primary care specialists and non-GP healthcare professionals, as well as patients on the value and utility of IR to improve patients' access and care.

"Interventional radiology is not a new field and over the last few decades it has proven to be an integral part of modern patient care, helping improve patient outcomes with reduced morbidity and shorter recovery times. However, we continue to face limited awareness amongst our medical colleagues when



it comes to the extensive capabilities of Interventional Radiologists, who sometimes see us as competition rather than partners,” said Dr Rogan.

“As experts in embolisation, we form an integral part of the patients’ treatment team to ensure they receive tailored care that suits their needs and requirements. It is important to note that as Interventional Radiologists, we are uniquely trained to offer minimally invasive image-guided therapies such as embolisation as part of a comprehensive service, which starts with clinical and imaging diagnosis, then onto minimally invasive treatment delivery as well as associated clinical management across a range of conditions.”

For over 40 years, IRSA has been hosting the ASM to bridge the gap and raise awareness of the latest techniques and technologies in interventional radiology. As a thought-leader in interventional radiology, IRSA is committed to providing opportunities for IRs to upskill and continue spearheading Interventional Radiology standards in Australasia.

Dr Brendan Buckley, Clinical Director of Interventional Radiology at Auckland City Hospital, who co-lead a practical workshop at the ASM on cryoablation, emphasised the importance of multi-specialty care and integration of IR into multidisciplinary teams.

“There is a global trend in increased diagnosis of kidney cancers. In 2023, around 4,600 Australians and over 600 people in New Zealand were diagnosed with kidney cancer^{1,2}. As IRs, we can offer a minimally invasive treatment option, like cryoablation, that can provide excellent outcomes with reduced complications and quicker recovery, particularly for elderly patients,” said Dr Buckley.

“However, this innovative procedure could be more widely considered. It is just one example, but it proves that as a healthcare industry we need to do more for Interventional Radiologists to be seen as partners to GPs and specialists, as we all have the same goal – to help our patients attain the best outcomes and care.”

Interventional Radiology as a field of interdisciplinary medicine is positioned for significant growth in coming years and will remain a significant driver of improved patient outcomes. To ensure the potential of Interventional Radiology is fully utilised, healthcare professionals across all specialties need to be proactive in facilitating discussions and raising awareness of minimally invasive procedures offered by IRs to advance Australasia toward more holistic, patient-centered approaches in healthcare.

For more information on the IRSA and its services, visit: <https://irsa.com.au/>

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About the Annual Scientific Meeting

The Annual Scientific Meeting held by the Interventional Radiology Society of Australasia, first held in 1981, is an opportunity for allied health professionals with an interest in interventional radiology (IR) to join the conversation about latest advancements in IR technologies and procedures, and ensure new developments are being integrated into healthcare across Australia and New Zealand.

About IRSA

IRSA is the membership body for healthcare professionals working in the field of interventional radiology. For further information please visit <https://irsa.com.au/>.