

# Gold Coast 4th Annual Palliative Care Conference 2025

## Palliative Medicine Interventions and Updates

### Friday 20<sup>th</sup> June - Presenter Biographies



**Dr Alexander Soobratty, Staff Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health**

***Chair of Session 1 - Pharmacotherapy 1: Drugs once banned that are now being assessed / becoming available***

Alex Soobratty is a specialist palliative care physician who has a special interest in complex pain management, holistic care of patients and compassion.

His training has taken him across the country to explore work and health conditions in Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania. This diverse experience has instilled an appreciation of the challenges of rural and regional communities.

Alex has the ambitious goal of transforming the way that analgesia is delivered in cancer-related pain, especially by learning from the examples of others.

Aside from his medical interests, he keeps himself grounded with his hobbies like cooking, rock climbing and a love of all things science fiction.



**Dr Shanthi Sarma, Staff Specialist Psychiatrist, Gold Coast Health**  
***Psilocybin & Ketamine***

Shanthi Sarma is the Conjoint Associate Professor of Mental Health at Bond University and Director of Neurostimulation and Mood Disorders at the Gold Coast Health Service. She is a fellow of Psychiatry of Old Age, has a clinical and academic interest in neurostimulation and is passionate about teaching. In addition to developing the ECT service she has established a public TMS, tDCS and ketamine service at the Gold Coast University Hospital. She is involved in ECT, TMS and ketamine research and is a CI on NHMRC funded multisite RCTs. Shanthi Chairs the Queensland ECT Committee and is an Executive Committee Member of the RANZCP Section of ECT and Neurostimulation. Shanthi provides ECT training for doctors and nurses all around Queensland and was involved in the production of a series of freely available educational videos about ECT for consumers, carers and clinicians which have had over 175 000 views on YouTube.



**Dr Sigrun Gutjahr, Staff Specialist Psychiatrist, Gold Coast Health  
*Psilocybin***

Dr Sigrun Gutjahr, is an experienced consultant psychiatrist and psychotherapist who has practiced on the Gold Coast for over 20 years in both public and private settings.

Sigrun has worked for many years with patients struggling with self-harming behaviours and runs Project AIR, a personality disorder service at Gold Coast Health.

Over the past 5 years her interest in psychedelic assisted psychotherapy increased while searching for improved treatment response in the large patient group with anxiety and depression. She trained with trainers from the Monash trial on Psilocybin assisted psychotherapy for anxiety disorders and with the principal investigators for the St Vincent trial in Psilocybin assisted psychotherapy in terminally ill patients. This study looked at death anxiety, adjustment to end of life as well as mental health. She will shortly commence as a therapist in the 3PAP trial, a multicentre trial run by Swinburne University, examining psilocybin in treatment resistant depression.

Sigrun sees patients for dynamic psychotherapy. Sigrun's special interests are treatment of personality disorders, anxiety, depression, medically unexplained symptoms and complex trauma patients.

She holds a Masters in psychotherapy and is a member of the Faculty of Psychotherapy of RANZCP.



**Dr Timothy Roberts, Staff Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health  
*Clonidine***

Dr Tim Roberts is a Specialist Palliative Care Physician with a commitment to patient-centred care, communication, and medical education. He began his medical career in the UK with a focus on Respiratory Medicine, before moving to Australia, where he was drawn to the compassionate, holistic nature of palliative care.

Tim is particularly passionate about improving access to palliative care in community settings. He is driven by the goal of expanding services that support people to remain at home and avoid unnecessary hospital admissions, especially in the final stages of life.



**Associate Professor Graham Grove, Staff Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health and Medical Director SPaRTa**  
***Chair of Session 2: Motor Neuron Disease***

Associate Professor Graham Grove is a consultant physician in palliative medicine and the medical director of QLD's regional and rural palliative care SPaRTa service. He is affiliated with Bond and Griffith Universities. He undertook medical school and physician's training in Adelaide. Following this he completed a theology bachelor and ministry accreditation whilst concurrently undertaking advanced training in palliative medicine, both part-time. He subsequently has worked as a consultant in Adelaide, the UK and Queensland. His interests include point-of-care ultrasound, radiology in palliative care, cancer pain interventions, prognostication and end-of-life and medical ethics.



**Dr Sushil Agwan, Senior Registrar Respiratory Medicine, Gold Coast Health**  
***Dyspnoea and NIV***

Sushil graduated from Bond University in 2017. Having undergone basic training at Gold Coast University Hospital (GCUH) and respiratory training at The Prince Charles Hospital and Sunshine Coast University Hospital, Sushil is currently completing a year of Sleep Medicine training back at GCUH. His interests include Bronchiectasis, Respiratory infections, and Pleural pathologies.'



**Saul McWhae, Senior Sleep Scientist, Gold Coast Health**  
***Dyspnoea and NIV***

Saul McWhae is a Senior Sleep Scientist with twenty years of experience starting at Princess Alexandra Hospital in Brisbane and transferred to Gold Coast University Hospital in 2016. Saul has Honours in a Bachelor of Biotechnology – Drug Design & Development at University of Queensland, St Lucia. Saul specialises in Invasive and Non-Invasive ventilation and all facets of sleep science. Saul has a special interest in neuromuscular diseases, in particular Motor Neuron Disease. Saul is the current facilitator of a Neuromuscular Multi-disciplinary Team Clinic at Gold Coast University Hospital involving specialties in Neurology, Sleep, Physiotherapy, Palliative Care and Gastrostomy. In his free time, Saul likes to work on his cars, watch AFL and play video games.





**Dr Matthew Neve, Radiation Oncologist, Gold Coast Health**  
***Sialorrhea and Radiotherapy***

Dr Matthew Neve is an experienced Radiation Oncologist at Icon Cancer Centre Gold Coast University Hospital and Icon Cancer Centre Gold Coast Private. In 2008, he completed his Bachelor of Human Biology (BHB) and Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB) at the University of Auckland and became a fellow of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists in 2016. Dr Neve completed his medical training at North Shore Hospital and Auckland City Hospital prior to commencing specialist oncology training at Waikato Hospital.

Dr Neve gained extensive radiation oncology experience in New Zealand and Canada prior to commencing private practice in Australia. He undertook five years of specialty training as a radiation oncology registrar at Waikato Hospital before completing a radiation oncology fellowship at Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto, Canada. He is actively involved in education, research and clinical trials, regularly presenting at national and international oncology conferences. Dr Neve has co-authored articles in leading publications including the Journal of Clinical Oncology and Journal of Medical Imaging and Radiation Sciences, investigating radiation therapy treatments for head and neck and breast cancers.

Dr Neve's clinical experience covers a broad range of solid tumour malignancies, with special clinical interest in breast, head and neck, genitourinary, gastrointestinal and lung cancers.



**Dr Nicola Morgan, Staff Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health**  
***Chair of Session 3 – Cancer Focus: Changing Paradigms***

Dr Morgan works on the Gold Coast as a Specialist Palliative Care consultant physician, researcher and educator with Honorary Adjunct Assistant Professor status through Bond University. She is a passionate advocate for holistic care, advanced communication skills and the quality use of medicines at end-of-life. Prior to retraining in palliative care, she spent 15 years in both rural and urban general practice, equipping her with a broad skill base to care for patients in a range of healthcare settings.



**Dr Sean Hill, Medical Oncologist, Gold Coast Health**  
***Updates in Gynaecological and Gastrointestinal Cancers***

Dr Sean Hill is a Medical Oncologist working at the Gold Coast University Hospital with special interests in the fields of breast cancer, tumours of the central nervous system and gynaecological cancers.

Sean completed his advanced training in medical oncology in multiple hospitals in Southeast Queensland before relocating to the Gold Coast to complete a joint medical oncology/palliative care fellowship and was awarded a consultant position in 2022. He enjoys weaving in his skills learnt in palliative care into the everyday management of patient's cancer and treatment-related symptoms.



**Dr Eunji Hwang, Radiation Oncologist, Western Sydney Local Health District**  
***Emerging Radiotherapy Treatments – Carbon Ion and Proton Therapy***

Dr Eunji Hwang is a consultant Radiation Oncologist at Westmead Hospital, with specialist expertise in head and neck, skin, and paediatric/ AYA cancers. She obtained her FRANZCR fellowship in 2019 and was awarded the Thomas Baker Fellowship Grant to undertake a Proton Beam Therapy fellowship at The Christie Hospital in Manchester, UK (2019–2020). Dr Hwang is currently completing a PhD through the University of Sydney, focusing on the implementation of particle therapy in Australia. She is actively involved in multiple RANZCR working groups and special interest groups, particularly in paediatric and particle therapy.

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