

BIO-BABBLE



Newsletter of the Australasian Biospecimen Network Association

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A VERY BIOBABLE CHRISTMAS

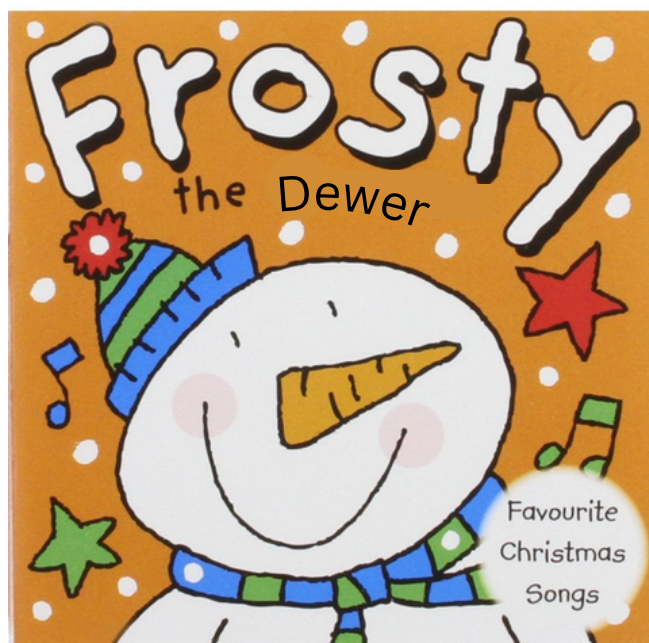
Welcome to our final Biobabble of the year! 2022 has been a huge year of growth for ABNA and our community and one that I think we'll all look back on as an exciting return to 'normal' and a period of diversification.

We launched our first annual seminar series and heard from a range of industry professionals who provided insights, reflections and guidance on the implementation of ISO 20387. We launched the pilot phase of our national specimen locator, held establishment meetings for the Biobanking Research Network, collaborated with members on key infrastructure grants and in October we were delighted to host Biobanking: Blue Sky Horizons as our first in-person conference since the beginning of the pandemic.

Perth really turned it on for us and we were incredibly humbled by the enthusiasm, excitement and engagement (unintentional alliteration) demonstrated by our members. We forged new collaborations and expanded our network with a focus on diversity and inclusion. I'm sure I speak on behalf of the committee it was so incredibly rewarding to see this vision come to life and as plans begin for our 20th Annual Meeting in October 2023 I hope we can maintain this momentum!

Tis the season and for our final Biobabble of the year and in recognition of our 2023 Annual Meeting theme 'Biobanking on Record' we thought we'd bring you some festive biobank hits!

Brace yourselves, there are more on page 4!



5 MIN WITH A BIOBANKER

We approach a different professional in the biobanking arena with the same five questions each month.



Dan Catchpoole, Principal Research Scientist

[Biospecimen Research Services, Children's Cancer Research Unit, Kids Research, Sydney Children's Hospital Network, NSW](#)

THE QUICK QUESTIONS

Tea or Coffee? Coffee (with the option of some scotch whiskey depending on the time of day)

Cats or Dogs? Dogs

Coriander? Yes

Star Trek or Star Wars? Star Wars

1. How long have you been working in biobanking?

Since 2001

2. What has been the biggest biobanking challenge you have faced in your career so far?

The battle against ignorance of what biobankers actually do! We are not archivists who 'put sample on ice' and our role is not just 'storage' of biospecimens. We are not 'just glorified specimen collection' and we are not measured by 'how many samples we have stored'. These are some of the quotes I have had said to by our research leaders as they describe how they see biobanking..... filling freezers full of tissue for no purpose. On the contrary, I have pushed hard and often unsuccessfully that biobanking, as a recognized discipline within our research landscape, provides the fundamental tissue handling expertise required to generate impactful and systematically managed research questions. Despite our reliance on database and freezer technology biobanking is still very much a human activity with biobankers being responsible for connecting people together so as to be able to ask and answer relevant biomedical and health related questions. From consenting the patients, to working within our pathology and surgical department to capture the right biospecimens within clinical guideline and then to negotiate on behalf of the researchers to allow the ethical transfer of biospecimens to research studies, it can be seen that a biobanker needs to have a wide range of human-interaction skills. The biggest biobanking challenge I have then faced is having my team be recognized as the tissue handling experts that they are and to be supported within our health system to build and strength the human connections required to see biospecimens donated by patients and distributed to the best research studies possible. Efforts by our health research leaders to address the 'biobanking' issue tend to just build extra large freezers, but neglect establishing the professional interrelationships between all stakeholder that are required within our health system that should be built on trust, not suspicion, and would leverage the professional expertise provided by biobankers to the benefit of all.

3. What are you excited about that is happening in your biobank/what is your biobank doing that is new and innovative?

The recognition of the role of biobanking with our data generation and analytics pipelines has led to consideration of the next phase of biobanking implementation: Biobanking 4.0. Historically the goals of biobanking have shifted from pure sample collation (Biobanking 1.0) to sample quality and reproducibility (2.0) and then to facility management, business models and sustainability (3.0). Now we see biospecimens being collected in a range of diagnostic and clinical research studies and fed straight into data generation 'omic' or digital technologies, each which produce masses of computer readable data. Subsequently, this data needs to be assessed by computer science specialists to make sense of it all. Biospecimens are now not seen as tubes of tissue but as packets of information. So biobankers are going to have to position themselves at the beginning of these data pipelines. We have to start to talk to the computer experts, learn to speak their language. Biobankers will then be connecting the pathology departments and the IT facilities.... another interrelationship formed! But this then opens up further discussions – how do we introduce the [FAIR Data Principles](#) into biobanking practice? Will biobanking become more distributed rather than centralised with biobankers not want to have all the samples but shifting to know where all the samples are and how they are being used, continuing the connection directly with the patients at one end and the researchers at the other. If done well, biobanking will become a discipline that allows for the generation of hypotheses as it provides the infrastructure required to answer questions, rather than requiring a hypothesis to be formed before we build the infrastructure. Watch this space.... it could be an exciting time for biobanking if we play our cards right.

4. What is your one wish as a biobanker?

"A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown..... " (Mark 6:4). To be heard by the right people.

5. Three words that best describe your biobanking career:

Survivor. Protagonist. Advocate

5 MIN WITH A BIOBANKER - 2022 WRAP UP

Have you been keeping score through the year of the biobankers who have been featured in this section?

The results are in for 2022:

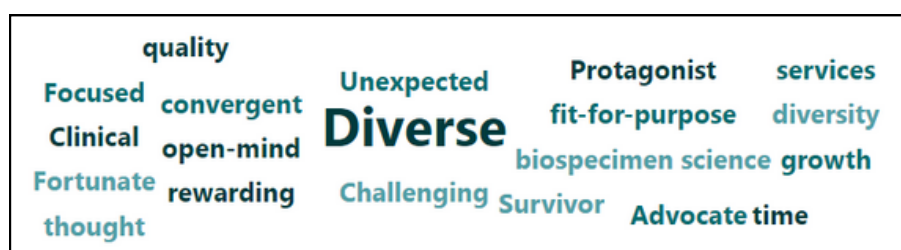
In the eternal battle of Cats vs Dogs – 69% of the biobankers interviewed are dog people.

Tea or coffee? Unsurprisingly this was a fairly even results, with Tea having a slight advantage (58%) over Coffee, however many commented that they have been know to have both (perhaps it depends on the type of cake or pastry that is on offer at the same time?).

Much to the current ABNA Presidents dismay, 83% of respondents said yes to Coriander.

And pleasingly 75% chose Star Wars over Star Trek.

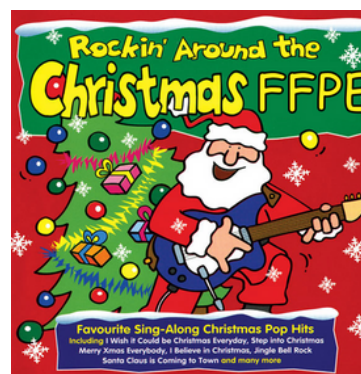
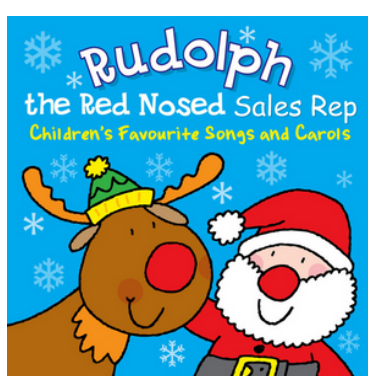
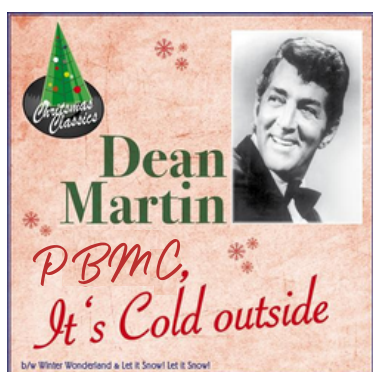
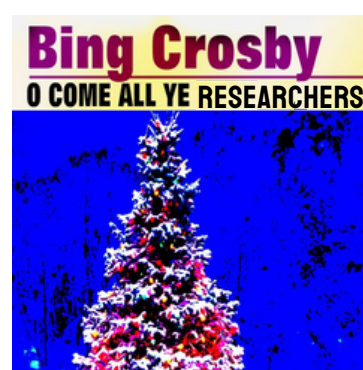
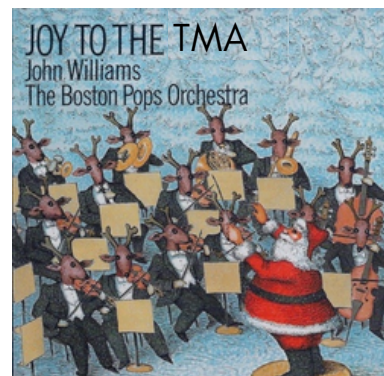
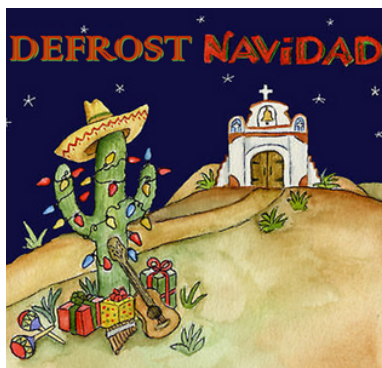
As expected our biobankers chose a wide range of words to describe their biobanking careers. Ironically, 'Diverse' was the only word utilised twice:



Thank you to all the biobankers who took part in 2022.

5 Min with a Biobanker will return in 2023 with a new set of questions.

On behalf of the BioBabble sub committee and wider ABNA management committee we'd like to wish you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and Happy and safe New Year. See you all in 2023!



If you have any suggestions for a short article for Bio-Babble, please contact: abna.biobabble@gmail.com



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