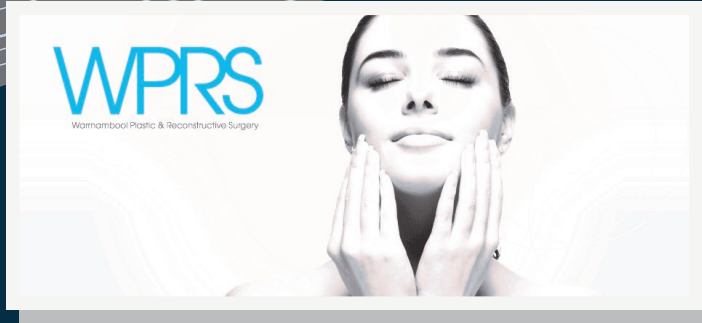


## this issue

- What are Merkel Cell tumours?
- Soft tissue sarcomas
- Recruitment of second surgeon at WPRS
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**Robert Toma**  
Warrnambool Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery

### Soft tissue sarcomas: gold standard of management

Soft tissue sarcomas are a large group of highly malignant tumours that arise from muscle, fat, blood vessels nerves and other soft tissue in the body. More common examples include dermatofibrosarcoma and liposarcoma.

These tumours often present with a new mass that has changed over the period of a few months and can be painful. Clinically they appear firm, irregular in shape and often fixed to underlying structures.

So how do we avoid missing one of these tumours? My rule of thumb is that any mass greater than 5cm that have developed rapidly or is symptomatic need imaging before any biopsy or surgery is planned. First line imaging should be an ultrasound. If this shows any concerning features then an MRI should be ordered, and this will be able to identify most sarcomas.

It is extremely important that if the imaging shows features of a sarcoma that the person is referred to an appropriate unit for management. It is often best if a specialty unit (such as Sarcoma unit at Peter MacCallum) perform the biopsy to obtain tissue diagnosis, as they will be able to plan the biopsy from a site that will not affect future surgery.

An inappropriate biopsy or surgical excision can often mean the difference between limb salvage surgery vs. amputation for limb sarcomas and can also affect life expectancy if the tumour is seeded.

At WPRS, we have a close working relationship with the sarcoma unit at Peter MacCallum. If you have any patients who you may suspect has a sarcoma or needs a work up then we are happy to manage these patients at WPRS under the guidance of the sarcoma unit.

www.wprs.net.au

Telephone:  
(03) 5562 5330

### Merkel Cell Tumours: What are they?

Merkel cell carcinomas first described in 1972 are rare primary skin tumour exhibiting neuro-endocrine differentiation. They make up less than 1% of skin cancers however are important as they carry an extremely poor prognosis.

These slow growing tumours present as a red blue nodule commonly on the head and neck (55%) or lower limb (20%). Men aged between 50-80 years old are most commonly affected. Up to 40% of these lesions will have nodal metastasis at initial presentation, and up to 33% of cases will develop distant metastasis.

Histologically they are a small cell tumour and must be differentiated from cutaneous lymphoma, small cell melanoma, and metastatic small cell lung cancer.

Treatment of these tumours involves wide local excision with 2 cm margin and sentinel lymph node biopsy. Merkel cell tumours are extremely radiosensitive tumours and hence radiotherapy is important adjuvant and in some cases primary treatment modality.

Prognosis for Merkel Cell tumour is poor with 5 year survival for stage 1 disease 81%, and stage 4 11%.

### SECOND SURGEON AT WPRS

WPRS is very excited to announce the recruitment to our service of a second plastic and reconstructive surgeon, **Mr John Masters**.

We, at WPRS, have been overwhelmed by the support from the medical community and patients over the last 4 years since opening. We have always strived to provide a quality and prompt service to patients. However, with demand growing, waiting list times for consultations have lengthened. With the services of a second plastic surgeon WPRS will now be able to see all referrals (Public and private) with minimal or no waiting time for consultation. Hence a better service for your patients.

In order to allocate patients to the next available appointment please address any plastic surgery referral to WPRS to both Mr Toma and Mr Master. This will ensure that your patient is seen as soon as possible. If you prefer Mr Toma or Mr Masters to see your patient please address the referral directly to them and the patient will be offered the next appointment available with that surgeon

### CHRISTMAS CLOSURES

The WPRS team would like to wish everyone a happy and safe Christmas. We thank you for your support during the year and look forward to another exciting year next year.



**Please note our rooms will be closed from  
Thursday 24th December 2015 until Sunday 10 January 2016.  
Our rooms will re-open as normal on Monday 11th January 2016.**



For all elective referrals during this period please fax to the rooms and we will call the patients on return from holidays. For emergencies please contact the surgical registrar at Southwest Healthcare or St John of God for advice.