



The hidden cost of our digital lives revealed at key scientific conference

29 April 2019

The impact of digital technology on the brain and how future manned space missions to Mars will affect the body are key themes of a scientific meeting of Australian, New Zealand and international anaesthetists in Kuala Lumpur this week.

Leading British neuro scientist and author Baroness Susan Greenfield will speak to anaesthetists and specialist pain medicine physicians about how the brain processes digital information and will explore the impact of social networking sites and video games at the annual scientific meeting of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) from April 30-May 3.

More than 1900 anaesthetists, pain specialists and other medical practitioners have gathered for the ANZCA meeting New worlds come explore at the Kuala Lumpur International Convention Centre. The meeting features dozens of significant research papers, workshops and presentations on clinical and scientific advances.

With 2019 marking 50 years since the moon landing, another keynote speaker, NASA astronaut Dr Michael Barratt will present several sessions including how to manage risk in human space flight, and medical treatment and transport for the International Space Station.

A specialist in aerospace medicine Dr Barratt served as a flight surgeon for NASA before his selection as an astronaut, and has played a role in developing NASA's space medicine programs for both the Shuttle-Mir Program and International Space Station.

The program also features sessions on the medicine behind planned human space flight to Mars with Dr Heidi F DeBlock, a visiting research scientist with NASA. Dr DeBlock is researching heart arrhythmias as a result of long duration spaceflight on the international space station.

Other presentations at the annual scientific meeting include recycling and anaesthesia, exploring the links between our gut microbiomes and pain and the correlation between the medical uses of opioids and the international illegal opioid trade.

The meeting will also feature presentations from the Royal College of Anaesthetists (UK), the College of Anesthesiologists of Ireland and the College of Anaesthesiologists, Academy of Medicine Malaysia.

The meeting follows the recent release of The Lancet special edition on pain medicine and anaesthesia. Internationally renowned anaesthesia researcher Professor Paul Myles, head of anaesthesia at The Alfred hospital in Melbourne is the lead author of the three part series.