



SPH SEMINAR SERIES

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it”: Influenza virus and pandemic preparedness

Kirsty Short is an NHMRC CJ Martin Early Career Fellow. She completed a PhD in 2013 at the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at the University of Melbourne, and then moved to the Netherlands to work in the Department of Virosciences at Erasmus Medical Centre. She returned to Australia at the end of 2015 to work in the School of Biomedical Science at the University of Queensland. She works on many different aspects of the flu including the synergy between the flu and bacterial infections, understanding how the flu virus affects different animal species, investigating the role of the immune system in severe flu infections and the interactions between the flu and chronic medical conditions such as diabetes and asthma.

The 1918-1919 flu pandemic has been described as “the greatest medical holocaust in history”. Although mortality estimates vary, it is thought that between 40 - 100 **million** people worldwide died from this pandemic. It would be easy to dismiss this pandemic as a ‘once off event’ that is simply something to be stored in the archives of medical history. However, the reality of the situation is that new, and often severe, flu strains are constantly emerging in the human population. In this talk I will discuss the major flu pandemics of the last century and what lessons we can learn from each of them. In addition, I will discuss the challenges that we face in today’s society in terms of preventing and/or mitigating any future flu pandemic. In particular, I will discuss the challenges presented to influenza virus pandemic preparedness by the prevalence of chronic medical conditions in today’s society and ever-changing human-animal interface.

Date: Tuesday 16th May
Time: 1-2pm
Room: 113
Location: Public Health Building, Herston

