Welcome to the August Edition of the MASCC Society News

Message from Editors Anna Ugalde and Anna Boltong

This month we feature two interviews that we believe will spark the interest of our MASCC members. The first is Satu Lipponen of the Cancer Society of Finland who discusses CanCon, an exciting European Union initiative aimed at improving cancer control and survivorship. The second interview is with Mauro Bianchi of Helsinn Healthcare SA, a MASCC Corporate Advisory Council member. Next edition we look forward to bringing you all the news from the MASCC Annual Meeting held in June in Miami. As always, contributions are welcome and we encourage you to contact us with achievements, publications or other news from the MASCC community.

From your editors, Anna & Anna

CanCon: Comprehensive cancer control

CanCon is an exciting program across Europe, and is designed to facilitate improvements in cancer control and includes specific initiatives targeting survivorship. Satu Lipponen from the Cancer Society of Finland discusses this ambitious new initiative, including what the plans are for this program over the next few years.

What does CanCon mean and what is it all about?

The name CanCon comes from ‘Comprehensive cancer control’ and is the name of a 3-year European Union co-funded programme where cancer experts across Europe and beyond are combining their efforts to improve cancer control and survivorship in 9 main areas. Cancon work began in 2014 and continues until 2017.

What is the proposed practical outcome of the work of CanCon?

The CanCon initiative will produce a guide called the European Guide on Quality Improvement in Comprehensive Cancer Control. The most important thing will be to have the contents of the guide applied in all 28 European Union countries.

Which groups are behind CanCon and how is it funded?

Cancon is a joint action, co-funded by participating organisations, institutes, universities and health care units together with the European Union. There are 27 associated partners who participate in joint action and financially contribute to CanCon as well as a further 49 collaborating partners. We are open to new partners, so the number of collaborative partners will grow.
Cancon, continued

Can you tell us a bit more about CanCon’s relevance to supportive care in cancer?

Cancon aims to improve cancer control by promoting quality cancer screening programmes, better integration of cancer care, community-based cancer care approaches and providing concerted action to improve survivorship, including palliative care. It is not only a question of how long people survive with cancer, but how well. Additionally, one of the important aims is to put cancer survivorship firmly on the political agenda. CanCon’s 9 designated work areas each resonate with MASCC’s philosophy and supportive care in cancer in general.

The work areas are:

1: Coordination  4: Guide coordination  7: Community-level cancer control
2: Dissemination  5: Platform for Member States’ cooperation  8: Survivorship & rehabilitation
3: Evaluation  6: Integrated cancer care  9: Screening

More detailed information on the work of each package is available from our website.

How can MASCC members be kept up to date with the progress of CanCon?

Visit our website: [http://www.cancercontrol.eu/](http://www.cancercontrol.eu/) or Follow us on Twitter @2014CanCon, #2014CanCon

MASCC Corporate Advisory Council: Helsinn Healthcare SA

The Corporate Advisory Committee (CAC) members work closely with MASCC in many ways, including participation in annual meetings. In future editions we will profile other CAC groups. In this issue of our newsletter, we introduce Helsinn Healthcare SA, in an interview with their Medical Advisor, Mauro Bianchi.

Who is Helsinn Healthcare SA?

Helsinn is a family run, privately owned pharmaceutical group focused on building a large portfolio of high quality products for cancer care. Our headquarters are in Lugano, Switzerland, with operating subsidiaries in the US, Ireland and a representative office in Beijing, China.

We are focused on the licensing of pharmaceuticals, medical devices and nutritional supplement products for cancer patients. Helsinn's products are out-licensed to its global network of marketing and commercial partners that have been selected for their local market knowledge.

Why have Helsinn Healthcare SA decided to become a member of the MASCC Corporate Advisory Council?

The CAC membership is an important part of our collaboration with MASCC. Helsinn and MASCC share a common goal. The aim of supportive care is to improve the quality of life of patients and their families. Helsinn's mission of improving health and quality of life in every person living with cancer is well established. I believe that our key messages, “Building quality cancer together” and “Building better todays for people with cancer”, are perfectly consistent with MASCC’s aims. Helsinn works across all indications of cancer supportive care meaning we are in touch with scientists, doctors, hospitals, regulators and organizations that are working to help alleviate the suffering of cancer patients. MASCC is an international organization dedicated to research and education and we believe we can share the experiences we have learnt in providing better care and therapies as well as learn much from MASCC and its members.

What member benefits do you & Helsinn Healthcare SA most enjoy & make use of?

CAC’s membership offers a number of benefits, and we are proud to have received this chance to build on our existing relationship with MASCC. In particular, it provides a unique opportunity to directly liaise with experts to discuss important topics related to the prevention and management of symptoms associated with cancer or associated by treatments. In my own personal experience, I began my career as a physician at the National Cancer Institute in Milan about thirty years ago and this coincided with the time when palliative care was becoming better known and more understood. I rapidly understood the clinical relevance of the symptoms and the importance of relieving the suffering of people with cancer. This professional journey from physician to medical advisor in a pharmaceutical company demonstrates an ability to deliver similar outcomes through different roles and therefore the collaboration with MASCC continues to play an important role in my professional life.
Meet new MASCC Member, Thomas Leblanc

I am the Assistant Professor of Medicine, Division of Hematologic Malignancies and Cellular Therapy, Duke University School of Medicine. I am interested in supportive care because during my training I observed us sometimes falling short of meeting the many needs of patients and families facing a cancer diagnosis. Then I learned about palliative and supportive care, and recognized the important extra layer of support that it can provide, and the enormous difference it can make. I’m a board-certified medical oncologist and palliative medicine physician, but my clinical focus and specialty is hematologic oncology. To date, however, there is little involvement of specialist palliative care in the blood cancer setting, so it has become my mission to study this phenomenon and to work to change it! I employ mixed-methods approaches to this problem, with a particular focus on the patient experience of living with blood cancer, and the issues around symptom burden, quality of life, doctor-patient communication, prognostic understanding, and treatment decision-making that go along with it. Ultimately I hope this work will lead to more upstream integration of specialist palliative care services into the comprehensive cancer care for patients with hematologic malignancies. I’ve heard so many wonderful things about the MASCC/ISOO community that I decided to join so I could experience it myself!

Meet new MASCC Member, Erik Muller

I am a medical oncologist in a community hospital in the east of the Netherlands, the Slingeland Hospital. I am also a palliative care consultant. The majority of my patients are over 70 years old and many have comorbidities. The impact of complications of cancer treatment in these patients is increased and sometimes dramatic. As much as I intend to let my patients benefit from new (and old) cancer treatments, I must do everything to prevent harm from these treatments. I expect to gain more knowledge in order to ensure my patients have a better life with cancer and with cancer treatment. Quality of life issue are underrated in mainstream oncological literature, but are of prime importance to my patients, at least, that is what they tell me every day.

Meet new MASCC Member, Doris Howell

I am the RBC Chair, Oncology Nursing Research and Education, University Health Network (Princess Margaret Hospital site) & Associate Professor, Lawrence Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto & Senior Scientist, Psychosocial Oncology and Palliative Care, Ontario Cancer Institute. My program of clinical research is focused on complex cancer symptoms and particularly understanding the contribution of symptom perceptions on symptom distress. In addition we test behavioural self-management interventions on symptom distress outcomes. I have joined MASCC because of the opportunity to network with other researchers in supportive care through MASCC/ISOO and the focus on state of the science on key topics at conferences is the attraction for joining MASCC.

Publications from MASCC members

1: Lacouture ME, Ciccolini K, Kloos RT, Agulnik M. Overview and Management of Dermatologic Events Associated With Targeted Therapies for Medullary Thyroid Cancer. Thyroid. 2014 Jun 5.


Publications from MASCC members

continued:


Have any news items to share?

Please send contributions for the MASCC News to MASCCnews@mascc.org or the co-editors:

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