Message from the Editorial Team

Message from Anna Ugalde and Anna Boltong

This month we are delighted to bring you interviews with our MASCC President Pro-Tempore, Dorothy Keefe as well as the MASCC Outstanding Young Investigator of the Year for 2013, announced at the MASCC Annual Meeting in June, in Berlin, Germany. We also share good news regarding our journal Supportive Care in Cancer and we feature three new MASCC members and some relevant publications.

From the editors, Anna & Anna

Interview with Professor Dorothy Keefe

In June this year, the Board of MASCC has appointed Prof Dorothy Keefe as President “pro tempore” for a term of up to one year. Dorothy speaks to the newsletter editors about this appointment and her commitment (and renewed) energy for MASCC in general, as well as the year ahead in particular.

How are you feeling about being back in the President’s seat?

I must say that I was very surprised to find myself in this position so soon after completing my own term as President in June 2012. However, I am once again highly honoured to have been appointed, and am committed to leading MASCC diligently until I am relieved of my post, at the latest next June after the Board elections. I am sure you will all join me in wishing all the best to Steven Grunberg and Petra Feyer, and in hoping that they will be able to resume their duties soon.

Are you feeling positive about MASCC’s current position?

Yes! MASCC is in a great position. The annual symposia continue to grow, with increases in both the quality and quantity of research presented. Our finances are in good shape, and our collaborations with other societies and with education and industry partners expand year by year. Our guidelines have major impacts and expand in scope. We truly are the number one society for Supportive Care in Cancer in the World!

What challenges do you foresee?

As with all organizations, MASCC needs constant attention and care in order to thrive. To that end we are having a Board Strategic Planning meeting in February next year. This will give us a chance to review our position, aims, mission and structure, and to update our plans for the future. If you have any ideas that you would like us to consider, please let me know.

What does the year ahead hold?

Now that I have recovered from the surprise of becoming MASCC President again, I have to say that I am very excited about the year ahead. We have further collaborations planned with Medscape; we have our annual meeting in Miami in June, and we have plans for growth of our membership, as well as for updating our website and social media presence. Steven Grunberg has been in no small way responsible for this, and I am determined to keep up his excellent work!
Interview with 2013 MASCC Outstanding Young Investigator

At this year’s MASCC Annual Meeting in Berlin, Michelle Janelsins was awarded the Outstanding Young Investigator Award for her presentation on yoga on perceived memory function in cancer survivors. Here we interview Michelle to learn more about her work.

What is your job title and where do you work?
I am an Assistant Professor of Surgery and Radiation Oncology at the University of Rochester Medical Center and the James P. Wilmot Cancer Center, in New York.

Why you are interested in supportive care in cancer?
As a researcher, I became interested in applying my training and work in neuroscience, cognition and immunology to the supportive care in cancer field because it was personally important to me—having had family and friends that have been affected by cancer has motivated me to make a difference in supportive care. The majority of my research involves understanding clinical, psychological and biological factors that lead to the development and trajectory of cognitive impairments in cancer patients and survivors, and on interventions to alleviate cognitive impairments related to cancer and cancer treatments.

What work did you present at the MASCC annual meeting, Berlin 2013?
We investigated the effects of yoga on perceived memory function in cancer survivors from a recently completed randomized clinical trial from our group at the University of Rochester Cancer Center Community Clinical Oncology Program (CCOP) Research Base and 23 CCOP affiliates nationwide. This work is important because we do not yet have standard interventions for cancer-related cognitive impairment as part of clinical practice. If physical activity interventions, such as yoga, could help with cancer-related cognitive impairment, this would be a tremendous benefit to our field. This is, to our knowledge, the first report from a randomized study design in a large nationwide sample of 328 participants to show that yoga significantly improves perceived memory function compared to controls receiving standard care. We also showed that, preliminarily, changes in memory due to yoga may mediate improvements in fatigue and quality of life.

What was a highlight of attending the MASCC conference this year?
It’s difficult to pinpoint any one highlight from the meeting! There were a number of excellent symposia and posters in many areas of particular interest to me including neurological complications, fatigue, psychosocial issues, and studies with biological mechanisms. The part that I enjoyed the most was engaging with colleagues from all across the world on international perspectives of supportive care in cancer. I am planning to attend the 2014 annual meeting.

What other work is keeping you busy?
I am currently finalizing a manuscript containing the results of the yoga and memory study presented at MASCC. This past April, I was awarded an NCI K Award to investigate the effects of exercise and low-dose ibuprofen for alleviating cognitive impairments in breast cancer patients receiving chemotherapy and also experiencing cognitive problems. I am also leading an NCI-funded nationwide longitudinal study to better understand the course of cognitive impairments in breast cancer and lymphoma patients receiving chemotherapy compared to healthy controls, as well as clinical, psychological and biological mechanisms contributing to cognitive impairments.

For more information about Michelle’s work, she can be contacted at: michelle_janelsins@urmc.rochester.edu
Supportive Care in Cancer Impact Factor Increases!

Recent data on the impact factor for Supportive Care in Cancer demonstrate it continues to trend upwards, from 2.058 in 2010, 2.597 in 2011 and now 2.649 in 2012! Importantly, citations have increased over 150% since 2010, from 3,110 citations to 4,807 in 2012. The data also show the substantial increase in the number of people reading and citing manuscripts from the journal. The content in Supportive Care in Cancer is also increasing, with a 21% increase in submissions over 2011 reflected in 276 pages per journal issue, up substantially from 110 pages in 2008. Our journal’s Editor-in-Chief, Fred Ashbury, and the editorial board members of Supportive Care in Cancer are grateful to the 1,500 peer reviewers that provide advice in making manuscript decisions on over 800 submissions in 2012.

Meet a New MASCC Member - Mukelabai Mukelabai

My name is Mukelabai Mukelabai, DClinMed. I am the CEO & Founder of the Anaesthesia Critical Care, HIV/AIDS and Pain Management Centre (ACCHAP) in Zambia. I founded this non-government, not-for-profit, community-based organisation in response to the widespread and mostly untreated or undertreated pain (typically for patients with HIV/AIDS). I have made the proud decision to join MASCC/ISOO because of the unparalled work in the area of cancer and palliative care in general.

Meet a New MASCC Member - Barbara Vanhoecke

I’m a Belgian postdoctoral researcher ( Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium) currently working in the Mucositis Research Group under the leadership of Professor Dorothy Keefe (The University of Adelaide). I am sponsored by a Marie Curie International Outgoing Fellowship. I have an interest in radiation- and chemotherapy-induced oral and gastrointestinal mucositis. I’m currently developing in vitro models that are suitable for high-throughput screening of potential anti-mucositis drugs. A by-product of this work is that it should reduce the number of laboratory animals in mucositis research in the future. I care about the patient's quality of life during and after cancer treatment, which is my daily motivation and inspiration in the lab. I have joined MASCC to touch base with colleagues and researchers from throughout the world and to disseminate and discuss new ideas and observations in a multidisciplinary and multi-professional environment. It is also a great way to expand my professional network and it creates opportunities for future collaborations and student exchange programs.

Meet a New MASCC Member - Victoria Busch

I am a Community Cancer Care Nurse Coordinator at the Central Coast Local Health District NSW Australia. I am involved in supportive care because this service has a 24 hour phone contact service for all patients receiving cancer treatment living on the Central Coast of NSW - so we manage symptoms and side effects associated with chemotherapy or radiotherapy treatments. I decided to join MASCC as I was researching information for a nurse-led clinic for Oral chemotherapy patients and read the articles from MASCC and was very impressed. I wanted to join to gain further knowledge. We are excited to have recently managed to get a trial up and running within 3 months of the idea coming into existence - as the lead clinician in this project I feel a great sense of achievement in being able to move ahead with the project so quickly.
Some New Supportive Care Publications by MASCC Members


Have any news items to share? Please send contributions for the MASCC News to MASCNEWS@mascc.org or the co-editors: Anna Ugalde Anna.ugalde@svhm.org.au Anna Boltong anna.boltong@petermac.org For more information please contact: Åge Schultz, MASCC Executive Director aschultz@mascc.org