Welcome to the October Issue of the Society News

Message from the Editor, Toni Clark

This month we are pleased to bring you news about the SIOG Annual Meeting in November, which will include a joint session featuring MASCC and SIOG. We have a report from Karin Olson about her activities on behalf of MASCC at the ISNCC, a focus on ISOO and an interview with its new President, Ourania Nicolatou-Galitis, as well as a feature on supportive care in India. Our Research Highlight concerns a study to test MASCC’s Oral Agent Teaching Tool®. This month we welcome 14 new members who joined us in July.

As always, you can find the current and older issues of the MASCC Society News online at www.mascc.org/newsletters or in the back pages of our journal, Supportive Care in Cancer.

MASCC and SIOG to Offer Joint Session at SIOG Annual Meeting

The International Society of Geriatric Oncology (Société Internationale d’Oncologie Gériatrique, SIOG) will hold its 2015 Annual Conference in Prague, Czech Republic, November 12-14. The theme of this year’s meeting is “Geriatric Oncology & Supportive Care: a Global Approach to Advance the Science.”

MASCC will have a booth at the conference and will also join SIOG in a joint session titled, “Nutrition Issues and Challenges in Older Patients with Cancer.” This session, chaired by Matti Aapro and Christopher Steer, will explore nutritional issues in older cancer patients, such as anorexia, cachexia, malnutrition, and sarcopenia.

Other topics on the scientific program include advances in geriatric oncology, palliative care across the continuum, innovative approaches to diagnosis and treatment, management of solid tumors, hematological malignancies, practical aspects of multidisciplinary care, geriatric oncology training, and a geriatric oncology nursing forum.

SIOG is a multidisciplinary medical society of physicians in the fields of oncology and geriatrics, along with other allied health professionals. The Society has over 1,500 members in more than 40 countries around the world. The conference provides a unique opportunity for researchers, clinical oncologists, geriatricians, radiologists, psychologists, nutritionists, nurses, senior cancer survivors and advocates to learn, interact, and share results and best practices in treating older adults with cancer. More conference and registration information is available at the SIOG website: www.siog.org.

MASCC and ISNCC: A Report from Karin Olson

For the past year, Karin Olson, RN, PhD, has served as MASCC’s representative to the International Society of Nurses in Cancer Care (ISNCC). During this time, Karin has been a member of the ISNCC Planning Committee for the Society’s International Conference on Cancer Nursing (ICCN), in which role she helped to find speakers, reviewed submitted abstracts, and helped to rewrite the abstract criteria for 2016. At this year’s meeting, July 8-11 in Vancouver, B.C., Canada, Karin delivered a plenary address at the ISNCC-MASCC Joint Session. Her presentation was titled, “The Etiology and Management of Fatigue in Individuals With Cancer: An Update.” She also spoke on “Fostering Adherence — A Core Component of Symptom Management” at a dinner sponsored by Bayer, Inc.

Karin, along with Joan Bottorff, also presented a preconference workshop on mixed-method research designs. Bottorff, who delivered a Keynote Address on the subject of cancer prevention, is Professor of Nursing in the Faculty of Health and Social Development and Director of the Institute for Healthy Living and Chronic Disease Prevention at the University of British Columbia.

Karin Olson is a Professor on the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Alberta (Edmonton, Alberta, Canada), where she teaches courses on research methods and chronic illness. She also has a clinical practice as a nurse consultant with the Edmonton Zone Palliative Care Program. A past Chair of MASCC’s Fatigue Study Group, Karin is a member of MASCC’s Board of Directors.

MASCC extends thanks to Karin for her representation and activities on behalf of the Society.
A Focus on Oral Oncology: MASCC and ISOO

The International Society of Oral Oncology was formed to promote scientific exchange among oncology professionals about cytotoxic therapy and its impact on the oral environment. The Society provides a multidisciplinary forum for scientists and clinicians to collaborate in such areas as the oral sequelae of cancer therapies, new research strategies, and educational initiatives in cancer-related oral morbidity.

ISOO formed an alliance with MASCC in 1998 and, each year, the two societies hold a joint annual meeting. In addition, the MASCC/ISOO Oral Care Study Group works to enhance knowledge of oral complications from cancer therapies and to improve clinical management. There are also many ISOO members in MASCC’s Mucositis and Bone Study Groups.

At this year’s Annual Meeting in Copenhagen, Ourania Nicolatou-Galitis, DDS, MSc, DrDent, of Greece, became the new ISOO President, succeeding Richard Logan of Australia. Ourania is Professor and Chair, Clinic of Hospital Dentistry at the Dental School, University of Athens, Greece. In her practice, as well as research, she specializes in the diagnosis and management of oral complications of standard and targeted cancer therapies. Such complications can affect systemic response to therapy, as well as oral health-related quality of life. Ourania is the founder of the Hellenic Society of Oral Oncology (www.oraloncology.gr). She is also Chair of MASCC’s Bone Study Group.

An Interview with ISOO President

Ourania Nicolatou-Galitis

What are your current interests and professional activities in oral oncology?

I believe that oral oncology is a “mirror of health of the cancer patient” and that dental practitioners must be involved in the management of cancer patients. It is our responsibility to attract and educate them. All of my current professional activities stem from this belief. I am actively involved in research and in the management of oral complications of cancer therapies, as well as teaching oral oncology at both the undergraduate and graduate level, including dental and medical school. I organize annual seminars and “Days of Oral Oncology” for dentists and other healthcare professionals. I’ve also promoted a focus on oral oncology within the Mediterranean Multidisciplinary Oncology Forum (MMOF). An oral oncology section has been established, and MMOF’s biannual meetings will now include an oral oncology workshop.

What did you think of this year’s MASCC/ISOO meeting?

The 2015 MASCC/ISOO meeting in Copenhagen was excellent, motivating, and rewarding! MASCC’s Study Groups offer a unique opportunity for collaboration within and beyond MASCC/ISOO. A good example is the collaboration between the MASCC/ISOO Oral Care Study Group and the European Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation (EBMT). This resulted in a jointly authored position paper on basic oral care for hematology-oncology patients and those receiving hematopoietic stem cell transplants.1 This paper was a highlight for ISOO and, very importantly, serves as a model of collaboration within the MASCC/ISOO platform. Another highlight for ISOO was our Continuing Education Course, Oral Infection in the Cancer Patient. Session 1 included presentations and discussion of changes in the oral microbiome related to cancer and cancer therapy, bacteremia associated with oral infections, oral fungal infections, and antimicrobial resistance. Session 2 focused on potentially malignant oral lesions and the clinical and biological procedures for diagnosing them.

What do you see as the greatest supportive care needs in oral oncology generally?

And in Greece, in particular?

While oral oncology is a rapidly evolving field, we need to increase its visibility at the various local, national, and international levels. For example, in Greece, we need well-trained oral and dental oncologists in both our cancer centers and in private settings. I hope that young scientists and graduate students from different countries will establish local oral oncology societies and participate in the MASCC/ISOO community — its study groups and guidelines projects — for the benefit of their patients. In this era of biological, targeted therapies and immunotherapies, there is more than ever a need for oral oncology expertise, including the recognition, classification, diagnosis, prevention, and management of oral complications related to new therapies. These needs can best be met through the collaborative work of MASCC/ISOO.

What’s next for ISOO?

ISOO’s primary goal is to continue its important partnership with MASCC toward the prevention and management of oral complications in cancer therapy. We look forward to next year’s MASCC/ISOO meeting in Adelaide, Australia as an opportunity to reach more young investigators and strengthen collaborative ties with clinical and research partners around the world.

Supportive Care in India - Perspectives from the MASCC Annual Meeting

Supportive care and palliative care are issues of growing concern in India. Though some parts of the country have developed palliative care services, they are rudimentary or nonexistent in much of India, especially rural areas.1 The costs of providing such services for millions of patients are often prohibitive and are beyond the reach of most individuals. While India has a large pool of well-trained health professionals, there is as yet insufficient emphasis on supportive and palliative care to meet the country's needs. Also, there remains a need to raise public awareness about supportive and palliative care, as well as the importance of early diagnosis and cancer risk factors.

At this year's Annual Meeting, there were more than 40 poster presentations highlighting the state of cancer supportive care research in India. Among these, Stephen Samuel, MPT, of the Department of Physiotherapy, Manipal University, Manipal, Karnataka, India, was one of nine Young Investigator Awardees for his research on the effects of exercise during cancer treatment. His work was titled, “Impact and Feasibility of an Exercise Program During Chemo-Radiotherapy in Head and Neck Cancer Survivors: A Randomized Controlled Trial.” Stephen also presented a poster titled, “Fatigue and Performance Status in Stage 3 and Stage 4 Head and Neck Cancer Survivors Enrolled for Chemoradiotherapy: A Cross-Sectional Study.” In a previous systematic review (presented at MASCC/ISOO 2014), Stephen noted that there were only two studies on exercise among cancer patients published by physiotherapists in India. Stephen believes that exercise is a key component in overall wellbeing and plans to become an advocate for, and leader in, exercise oncology.

In a post-conference interview, Stephen commented that cancer care in India is mainly focused on diagnosis and treatment, especially pharmacological interventions. There is less attention to the management of symptoms and side effects and the importance of supportive care. The time is ripe, he maintains, for nonpharmacological interventions as low-level laser therapy for oral mucositis and pain relief, transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) as adjunctive therapy for pain management, and exercise-based programs to promote physical and emotional wellbeing. There is a great need for supportive care guidelines and for government and international funding in this area. Stephen added that he would like to see a MASCC-initiated meeting or workshop in India to promote awareness about supportive care in the clinical setting and to stimulate research.

Stephen is a physiotherapist with a master's degree in cardiopulmonary physiotherapy, health promotion, and fitness. He is currently pursuing a PhD in exercise-based cancer rehabilitation at Manipal University. His research interests also include nonpharmacological cancer pain management with laser and TENS, as well as the use of low-level laser therapy in the treatment and prevention of oral mucositis.

Sandip Mukhopadhyay, MD, who received a MASCC Travel Scholarship in both 2014 and 2015, was another of this year's participants from India. Sandip presented two abstracts related to CINV: “Perception of Chemotherapy-Induced Nausea and Vomiting in the Modern Era: A Study from the Developing World” and “Role of Olanzapine in Chemotherapy-Induced Nausea and Vomiting on Platinum-Based Chemotherapy Patients: A Randomized Controlled Study.” He also collaborated with S. Begam on a study showing a significant association between smokeless tobacco use and the development of oral mucositis as a complication of chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

In conversation, Sandip stressed the need for physicians to follow and promote the use of guidelines in different areas of supportive care to benefit patients and result in better outcomes. Like Stephen Samuel, he hopes to see more symposia in different cities to promote awareness about supportive care and participation in MASCC's CME workshops. As for research needs, Sandip said that, although many new drugs have been developed in recent years, many of these are not affordable for a large percentage of the population of the world including India. Sandip wishes to continue his work in the search for cost-effective therapies for CINV, which will extend the benefits of chemotherapy to more people around the world.

Sandip holds an MD degree with a specialization in Pharmacology from Christian Medical College, Ludhiana, India and is currently completing a Fellowship in Palliative Medicine. He is presently working at Burdwan Medical College in West Bengal, India, and is active in clinical research, as well as teaching and training of medical students.

Sandip completed his MD thesis on the subject of chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting and remains interested in CINV, as well as other aspects of supportive and palliative care.
Supportive Care in India, continued

Another Travel Scholarship recipient, Mahesh Menon, MBBS, MD, presented an abstract titled, “An Audit of Clinical Practices in the Management of Mucositis in Children in a Pediatric Oncology Ward: A 6-Year Experience.” He was also a co-author, with S. P. Singh Rana, on a study of radiofrequency ablation of sphenopalatine ganglion for cancer-related facial pain. Mahesh, whose research interests include pain and symptom management as well as cancer-related distress, is an anesthesiologist at Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital & Medical Research Institute, a 750-bed hospital in Mumbai, India. There, he has established the Department of Palliative Care Services, one of the largest private-sector palliative care services in the city, Mahesh says this would have been unheard of a decade ago when there was little or no awareness of supportive care in private sectors.

Mahesh has been seeing patients with cancer pain for over a decade. In this time, he has witnessed a gradual shift in attitudes on the part of cancer patients and their loved ones, as well as medical practitioners, from a fatalistic resignation to a culturally, scientifically, and financially more positive approach toward fighting the disease. It is slow, but steady progress, and Mahesh is optimistic about the future of supportive care. He adds that advocacy can make a significant, positive difference. Besides the need for more research, there is a need for initiatives from policy makers that focus attention on the importance of supportive care and make it possible for more patients to benefit.

Oral Chemotherapy Knowledge and Treatment Adherence
A Trial of MASCC’s Oral Agent Teaching Tool©

The increasing use of self-administered oral chemotherapy raises concerns about treatment adherence, as well as safety. Previous research has shown that adherence rates vary widely. Also, improper self-administration can compromise treatment effectiveness and may increase adverse effects. The MASCC Oral Agent Teaching Tool© (MOATT) provides a way to increase patients’ knowledge about oral chemotherapy and the importance of adherence to the prescribed treatment regimen. The MOATT, available in several languages, contains four sections: (1) assessment of the patient’s knowledge of the treatment plan, current medications, and ability to obtain and take an oral cancer agent; (2) instructions for storage, handling, and disposal of oral agents, identifying a system for remembering to take the drug, and actions for various situations, such as a missed dose; (3) drug-specific information, such as dose and schedule, side effects, and potential interactions; (4) questions to ascertain understanding of the information provided.

Recently, Jean Boucher and colleagues published the results of a study designed to evaluate a nurse-led intervention using the MOATT with the goals of increasing patient knowledge and adherence to therapy. This was a longitudinal, descriptive feasibility study conducted in an ambulatory thoracic oncology disease center at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston, Massachusetts. Thirty adult patients with lung cancer, who were being treated with the oral agent erlotinib, participated in the study (with 27 completing).

The intervention consisted of structured, nurse-led education sessions using the MOATT, along with a 72-hour follow-up telephone contact. Participants completed a Knowledge Rating Scale (KRS) and adapted Morisky Medication Adherence Scale–8 (MMAS-8) at the end of the first cycle of oral chemotherapy. Participants showed high knowledge levels and MMAS-8 scores. They reported a median of two side effects.

The structured education sessions and follow-up monitoring ranged from 14 to 30 minutes. Given the positive results, this intervention appears effective and feasible to integrate into the thoracic oncology setting. This study included no objective measures of treatment adherence, and the authors recommend that this should be done in the future. They also advocate the development of strategies for delivering supportive care to patients at home.


More information about the MOATT and its development can be found on the MASCC website: http://www.mascc.org/ MOATT.
New MASCC Members

MASCC welcomes the following new members who joined us in July:

- Elena Bardellini, Italy
- Frances Boyle, Australia
- Deb Doherty, United States
- Susan Glasper, United States
- Karen Grimshaw, New Zealand
- Sofiya Latifyan, Belgium
- Fiona Lawler, Ireland
- Gregory Levin, Canada
- Pia Lopez Jornet, Spain
- Raviteja Miriyala, India
- Giselle Silva, Brazil
- Julie Silver, United States
- Sterlinate Tshililiwa, United States
- Julius Xavier Scott, India

2015 Annual Meeting • Copenhagen • Photos are Now Online!

http://www.mascc.org/photo-gallery

Photos are listed by category. To download an image (full size), click on an album or image and then you will find download options at the top right of the image. You will need to create an account if you do not already have one, but this only requires an email and password. From there you can download as much as you want. If you need assistance do not hesitate to contact Beth Hollen at bhollen@mascc.org.

Join us in celebration of our 25th Anniversary!

Australia

MASCC/IS00 Annual Meeting on Supportive Care in Cancer
Adelaide, Australia | 23-25 June, 2016

SAVE THE DATE!

Have any news items to share?

Please send contributions for the MASCC News to MASCCnews@mascc.org
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