

Psychosocial Study Group Newsletter

Issue 1 ~ May 2019

Welcome to our first Psychosocial Study Group Newsletter for 2019. It is designed to share information about the Study Group's activities so you can take advantage of the rich expertise and diversity of our members. We hope to distribute this Newsletter at least twice a year and would very much welcome your input on its contents!

About the Study Group

The Psychosocial Study Group (SG) will celebrate its 20th anniversary in 2022. Our SG has 151 members from 27 countries, representing 14% of MASCC's membership. It is one of the largest of MASCC's SGs, which underscores the importance of psychosocial care to supportive care in cancer. The aim of the SG is to make the psychosocial dimension of care, including appropriate assessment and interventions, an integral part of routine cancer care for all patients.

Study Group Objectives

- To identify and involve members with a special interest in psychosocial oncology;
- To support MASCC in meeting members' needs with respect to psychosocial oncology issues;
- To contribute to discussions of program content and format for MASCC's Annual Meeting;
- To ensure continued, adequate, and high-quality psychosocial oncology content;
- To solicit opinions from MASCC members with a special interest in psychosocial oncology regarding SG aims, research, and projects.



Psychosocial SG Chair: Lidia Schapira, MD

Lidia Schapira is an Associate Professor of Medicine at Stanford University School of Medicine and Director of Cancer Survivorship at the Stanford Comprehensive Cancer Institute. She is also a member of the Breast Oncology Program at Stanford. She graduated from Dartmouth Medical School, trained in Internal Medicine at Beth Israel Hospital, and completed a Hematology and Oncology Fellowship at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts, followed by a Research Fellowship in Aging at Harvard Medical School.

Lidia's clinical focus is the treatment of breast cancer. She is a Co-Principal Investigator of a longitudinal study of young women with breast cancer based at Dana Farber/Harvard Cancer Institute. She has also pioneered research and training in communication skills for cancer clinicians and initiatives designed to improve awareness of cancer research and clinical trials in

underserved communities. She holds leadership roles in national and international societies. She serves as Editor-in-Chief of ASCO's website for the public, Cancer.Net, and is Consultant Editor for Art of Oncology for the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*.

A small personal insight into what makes Lidia tick can be found in a recent publication at ASCO Connection: [Meet Lidia Schapira, MD, FASCO](#).

Lidia's top 5 things to see and do in San Francisco

1. Farmer's Market on Saturday morning at the Embarcadero
2. MOMA Museum of Modern Art (Incredible architecture, fabulous collection, and one of the best restaurants in the city, In Situ.)
3. Nike Store in Union Square
4. Legion of Honor Museum (The views are spectacular!)
5. Hiking in Marin County



A Survey of Cultural Diversity

Colleagues from Belgium, Sandra Michiels and Patrick Crombez, together with others, are working on the validation of a first survey to address the issue of cultural diversity as a challenge for worldwide cancer care practice.

Cultural competence has been proposed as an approach to ensure high-quality cancer care to culturally diverse patients. But application of guidelines regarding cross-cultural issues is limited. Some critiques of the concept suggest an overemphasis on the patient's culture with scant attention paid to the culture of biomedicine.

There is a need to examine how the idea of quality of care in a multicultural context and related concepts, such as "patient-centered care" or "patient empowerment," vary among societies and cultures. We aim to probe the worldwide variety of perceptions of quality cancer care in multicultural settings.

We have already completed three phases of testing of the questionnaire by collaborating with subgroup members from Belgium, India, Japan, Turkey, and the United States. With the help of Dr. Mahati Chittem, we plan to test the questionnaire in two very remote countries (both culturally/traditionally and in clinical practices): Belgium and India. The final objective is to broadly disseminate the survey among the worldwide community of MASCC members and thus reach supportive cancer caregivers from all over the world. We hope to launch the survey within three months.

We are still looking for members who share our interest in cross-cultural issues and who want to contribute to this research project or others. If you are interested, please contact Sandra or Patrick (pictured here at the 2017 MASCC Meeting in Washington, DC): sandra.michiels@bordet.be or patrick.crombez@bordet.be.



Psychosocial Sessions at the MASCC/ISOO Annual Meeting

The 2019 **MASCC/ISOO** Annual Meeting will take place in San Francisco, California from June 21 to 23. With themes of digital health, sexual health, treatment toxicities and survivorship, the Meeting includes many sessions relevant to our Study Group members. Don't miss the Friday afternoon session on burnout that follows on from the group discussion we had in Vienna: Parallel Session 5, When Carers Need Care: Burnout in Cancer Healthcare Providers and Caregivers. Other highlights include a debate on survivorship care plans (Saturday afternoon) and a session on psychosocial and general consequences of bone toxicity (Sunday afternoon). These are in addition to outstanding plenary sessions, e-poster sessions, and a myriad of other learning opportunities.

This year, 59 abstracts in the psychosocial category were received, and these represented 22 countries. So, there is no shortage of excellent research and many diverse perspectives to look forward to at the meeting.

Study Group Meeting

Our Study Group Business Meeting in San Francisco will take place on Saturday morning at 7:30 in the Seacliff A-B Room. We hope to review existing SG activities and plan our work for the coming year. Please come with your ideas, and if you will not be with us in San Francisco, please drop us a line with your suggestions.

At the SG meeting, we will also announce the best abstract from among those submitted by our members to the Annual Meeting. Please join us to celebrate!

Mindfulness and Compassion Fatigue Project

A Report from Lauren Breen, PhD, MASCC member from Curtin University in Perth, Western Australia

MASCC members were invited to participate in an online survey asking that included demographic questions and measures of empathy, mindfulness, compassion fatigue (comprising compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress), and burnout (comprising exhaustion and disengagement). Participants were 39 men (28.9%) and 96 women (71.1%), ranging in age from 22 to 69 years ($M = 43.06$ years, $SD = 11.26$) from 27 professions and 32 countries. Mean years of experience in cancer care was 12.63 ($SD = 8.09$) and mean patient contact hours per week was 23.20 ($SD = 13.57$), with 29 (21.5%) working 40 hours or more. A series of hierarchical multiple regression analyses was conducted to determine the variables that uniquely correlated with the components of compassion fatigue and burnout.



For the components of compassion fatigue, mindfulness was positively correlated with compassion satisfaction and negatively associated with secondary traumatic stress but had no relationship with the burnout component. For the components of burnout, mindfulness was negatively associated with disengagement but had no relationship with exhaustion. Hours of patient contact per week uniquely explained disengagement only, which might suggest that oncology professionals with high patient loads are not necessarily at risk for burnout or compassion fatigue.

This study provides evidence that the oncology health professionals' levels of mindfulness may be protective in its associations with higher compassion satisfaction and lower burnout and secondary traumatic stress. Interventions aimed at improving oncology health professionals' wellbeing might consider mindfulness practice as a way to potentially increase compassion satisfaction and reduce burnout and secondary traumatic stress.

Are you interested in self-management in cancer?

Bogda Koczwara is establishing an international collaboration interested in self-management in cancer and is seeking collaborators with expertise in this area. We hope to have a meeting with the working group on late on Friday afternoon (June 21st) in San Francisco and to continue the work online. If you are interested in contributing to the project, please send your expression of interest indicating your expertise and track record to Bogda at bogda.koczwara@flinders.edu.au.





Would you like to mentor younger colleagues? Would you like to be mentored?

We are looking for SG members who are happy to connect with junior colleagues online or in person in San Francisco. If you want to contribute, please let us know and we will work on matching you with an appropriate mentee. If you are looking for a mentor – please let us know what you are looking for and we will try to facilitate it.

Looking for an Editor

Would you like to be the Editor of this Newsletter? We are looking for an enthusiastic editor of the Newsletter who would lead the development (gather news and write the content) 2 to 3 times a year. If you are interested and want to hone your skills by working with a supportive team of fellow psychosocial care enthusiasts, please let us know.

Do you have news to share?

We are looking for stories of achievements, interesting papers, and profiles of individuals who are remarkable for their contribution to care, research, education, and mentoring in the area of psychosocial care in cancer. If you have an idea to share, please let us know.

Looking forward to seeing you in San Francisco!

Your Psychosocial Study Group Vice-Chair,

Bogda Koczwara

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