Happy New Year!
Welcome to the January Issue of the MASCC Society News

Message from the Editor, Toni Clark

This month, we are pleased to introduce AgeCare®, a major research initiative to improve treatment and quality of life among older cancer patients. We bring you news from several MASCC members and information about World Cancer Day, to be observed on February 4th. We report on recent meetings that featured supportive and palliative care and announce the venue for MASCC/ISOO 2017. This month we welcome 13 new members who joined us in October.

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.

AgeCare® • Academy of Geriatric Cancer Research
Improving the Care of Older Cancer Patients

AgeCare®, an Elite Research Center based in the Department of Oncology, Odense University Hospital, Odense, Denmark, is directed by Jørn Herrstedt, MD, DMSc. The center aims to optimize cancer therapy and supportive care for older cancer patients through a wide range of research projects. Its staff includes physicians in numerous specialties, medical physicists, and nurses. The team also collaborates with translational researchers, molecular biologists, and clinical pharmacologists at the University of Southern Denmark, as well as other national and international centers. AgeCare works with other groups and societies at the intersection of geriatric oncology and supportive care. These include the Cancer and Aging Research Group, the International Society for Geriatric Oncology, and MASCC.

A large proportion of newly diagnosed cancer patients are over the age of 70, and this proportion is likely to increase over the next few years with the aging of the general population. Traditionally, patients in this age group have been underrepresented in clinical trials — including trials to evaluate new drug treatments — so our understanding of their tolerance for anticancer treatments, the risks incurred, and their responses to treatment is limited and may be erroneous.

The need for new management strategies for elderly cancer patients has been increasingly recognized internationally and calls for new initiatives in education, practice, and research. Specific needs include improved standardized geriatric assessments, enhanced biological assessments, specific trials for the elderly and most vulnerable patients, and a research infrastructure that addresses older adults through geriatric and oncology research collaborations.

AgeCare was established to address these needs through research collaborations among oncologists, geriatricians, surgeons, oncology nurses, and other healthcare professionals, as well as translational scientists, working together toward the individualized management of older cancer patients with the aim of improved care and maximized benefits of treatment.

Visit www.agecare.org to learn more about AgeCare’s projects and publications.
MASCC members Marie Flannery and Gordana Popovic were among 15 oncologists honored by the Conquer Cancer Foundation of ASCO for their high-quality research contributions in the field of palliative care. The recipients of the Merit Awards in Palliative Care were announced at the 2015 Palliative Care in Oncology Symposium in October.

Marie Flannery, PhD, RN, is an Assistant Professor at the School of Nursing, the Wilmot Cancer Institute, and the Department of Surgery, University of Rochester Medical Center, and Research Assistant Professor in the Department of Surgery. She is a member of MASCC’s Geriatrics and Palliative Care Study Groups. Marie presented a poster titled “Comparison of Older Adult Symptom Occurrence Rates in a Geriatric-Onology Clinic with Meta-Analysis for Adults Receiving Chemotherapy” at the Symposium. While a majority of cancers occur in older adults, this age group is often underrepresented in studies and information about their symptom experience is therefore limited. Flannery and her research team confirmed that, compared with published data, these older adults experience significantly higher rates of many symptoms, including drowsiness, dry mouth, memory problems, distress, and sadness. The study highlights the importance of cognitive and psychological assessment in the older adult population and underscores the need for further research on the symptom experience of older oncology patients to advance palliative care and symptom science.

Gordana Popovic, MD, PhD, Pulmonologist, is a Clinical and Research Fellow in Palliative Care in the Department of Psychosocial Oncology and Palliative Care, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Her primary interests are in palliative and end-of-life care, psychosocial oncology, and respiratory medicine. She is a member of three MASCC Study Groups: Palliative Care, Respiratory, and Neutropenia, Infection & Myelosuppression. Gordana presented a poster at the Symposium titled “Agreement Between Physician and Patient Performance Status Ratings in an Outpatient Setting.” The aim of the study was to assess agreement between physician and patient-rated performance status using the Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group (ECOG) in an outpatient oncology palliative care clinic. In general, patients rated their performance status worse than did the physicians. This was especially true for patients with a greater symptom burden. At the same time, older patients tended to rate their status as better. Future research will look at survival data in relation to performance status assessments.

The Conquer Cancer Foundation of ASCO was established to pursue dramatic advances in the prevention, treatment, and cure of all types of cancer. The Foundation funds breakthrough cancer research and shares cutting-edge knowledge with patients and physicians worldwide. It aims to improve the quality of and access to care and to enhance quality of life for everyone touched by cancer. The Foundation has awarded over $90 million through nearly 1500 grants and awards in 65 countries. For more information about the Foundation: https://www.conquercancerfoundation.org.

Make 2016 the year you introduce a colleague to MASCC! We currently have more than 1,000 members worldwide, representing more than 60 countries and 6 continents. In the past year, we’ve seen an increase in members from all countries, most notably Denmark and India. Membership benefits include a free subscription to our monthly journal, Supportive Care in Cancer, access to members-only areas of our website, discounts on supportive care books and meeting registration fees, and numerous opportunities to work with MASCC Study Groups, to exchange ideas and expertise, and promote supportive care in cancer. Membership is open to medical and surgical oncologists, radiologists, nurses, dental professionals, pharmacists, social workers, dietitians, psychologists, students, industry representatives, and anyone interested in the prevention and management of the adverse effects of cancer and its treatment.
A Nursing Career in Supportive Care: Identifying and Addressing Unmet Needs

Nurses have always been on the front lines when it comes to supportive care and, through interactions with patients and their families, are often in a unique position to recognize supportive care needs, help secure adequate resources, and participate in providing a healing environment.

MASCC member Janyne Afseth, MSc, PgCTLHE, BSN, RGN, ACTA, a long-time oncology nurse, spoke to us recently about the importance of supportive care in her profession. She says that being able to provide support to patients through illness, and hopefully recovery, is one of the greatest rewards of a nursing career. Janyne has been an oncology nurse for nearly 25 years, first at the Sunnybrook Health Science Centre in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, and later at the Edinburgh Cancer Center. She became interested in supportive care early in her career, through the work of Margaret Fitch, a leader in supportive care nursing in cancer. When she moved to Edinburgh, Janyne first worked as a breast cancer research nurse. In this role, she immediately recognized that appropriate supportive care is critical to the delivery of optimal anti-cancer treatment.

When the Scottish Cancer Research Network was formed, Janyne became the lead research nurse and then the research manager for cancer for the southeast of Scotland and Lead Cancer Research UK nurse for Edinburgh. During this time, her interest in supportive care grew, particularly in the area of improving the communication of supportive care needs, and she became eager to undertake her own research on the experiences of patients experiencing the side effects of both disease and treatment. She subsequently enrolled in a PhD program and is conducting research at the Edinburgh Centre for Neuro-Oncology on psychosocial and supportive care needs of glioma patients. She has continued to develop her interest in the recognition and assessment of supportive care needs and the delivery of appropriate supportive care, especially needs that are unique to glioma patients, such as coping with neurocognitive symptoms.

Janyne is also currently involved in the evaluation of a large initiative in Scotland that seeks to meet the post-treatment needs of cancer patients. She teaches undergraduate and postgraduate nurses, with a focus on the role of nurses in supporting patients who are involved in clinical trials. She is on the Royal College of Nurses’ Steering Group for Cancer and Breast Care, which seeks to provide a voice for nurses with respect to relevant policy issues in the UK. Janyne recently presented a paper, “Translating the Evidence Into Practice: Identifying and Addressing Unmet Needs,” at the 2015 International Conference on Cancer Nursing in Vancouver.

A Focus on Social Support For World Cancer Day, February 4th

World Cancer Day is a global observance that helps raise people’s awareness of cancer and how to prevent, detect, and treat it. This event is held on February 4th each year. To mark this day, people, businesses, governments, and nonprofit organizations work together to help the general public learn more about the different types of cancer, prevention, detection, treatments, and survival. The World Health Organization (WHO) works with organizations such as the International Union Against Cancer (UICC) to promote ways to ease the global burden of cancer. World Cancer Day themes focus both on preventing cancer and raising the quality of life for cancer patients.

Among several priorities of this year’s event is a focus on support — both for people living with cancer and their caregivers. “Maintaining social support networks and talking about cancer can be important strategies for coping with the social and emotional impact of cancer, both in the short and long term.” This year’s campaign emphasizes the importance of asking for support when it’s needed, whether from partners, family, friends, colleagues, or healthcare professionals, and the importance of supporting others, both cancer patients and their caregivers.

The campaign recognizes that caregivers, most often partners, family members, or friends, usually have little preparation and little support, themselves, for their important role. “Many carers put their own needs and feelings aside to focus on the person with cancer, and as a consequence may experience emotional distress and social isolation. Recognizing the challenges of looking after someone with cancer and seeking support can have wide-ranging benefits for coping and quality of life.”

Visit www.worldcancerday.org for more information, a Campaign Toolkit, and ideas on how to mark this occasion in your own community or workplace.
Inaugural Guildford Supportive Care in Cancer Course

The Inaugural Guildford Supportive Care in Cancer Course was held November 4th and 5th in London. The course was organized by Andrew Davies, who is Clinical Director Supportive & Palliative Care, Royal Surrey County Hospital / St. Luke’s Cancer Centre and also Vice President of the Association for Palliative Medicine of Great Britain and Ireland. It was sponsored by the Department of Supportive & Palliative Care at the Royal Surrey County Hospital (and St. Luke’s Cancer Centre) and hosted by the Royal College of Physicians, London. The course provided an up-to-date, evidence-based review of current issues in supportive care. Speakers included MASCC members Sam Ahmedzai, Andrew Dickman, Siri Beier Jensen, Cesar Migliorati, and Declan Walsh, as well as many other specialists in clinical oncology and related fields. With a strong focus on oral problems, such as infections and mucositis, the course also covered such topics as acute and chronic adverse effects of chemotherapy and radiation, cancer pain and its management, quality of life, and survivorship.

Over 200 healthcare professionals attended the course, with delegates from most disciplines within supportive care, representing the UK, Europe and beyond. The event was very well evaluated, and there is a plan to hold the course again next year (November 9-10, 2016, Royal College of Physicians, London).

MASCC again co-sponsored the annual Palliative Care in Oncology Symposium, held October 9 and 10, 2015 in Boston, Massachusetts, and several MASCC members participated in the event. Dorothy Keefe served on the Steering Committee. She also served on the Program Committee, along with Eduardo Bruera and Charles Loprinzi. Dorothy, Larry Einhorn, and Betty Ferrell served as discussants for presented abstracts. Speakers included Charles Loprinzi, Eduardo Bruera, and Judith Paice, who also served as session chairs, as well as Rudolph Navari, who presented research on olanzapine for prevention of CINV. MASCC had a booth at the conference, where Åge Schultz and Anne Young distributed information about MASCC and our 2016 Annual Meeting in Adelaide.

Washington DC to Host MASCC/ISOO 2017

The 2017 Annual Meeting of MASCC/ISOO will take place in Washington, DC, USA, from June 21 to 24. Scientific Meeting Chair Rachel Gibson has announced the theme of the meeting as “Sharing Successes in Supportive Care in Cancer.” Topics will include new models of coordinated care, strategies for managing targeted therapies, the integration of oncology and dermatology, and financial toxicity. New e-poster sessions will be mentored by leading world experts, many based at the National Cancer Institute or other US research centers.

Washington, DC, the US capital, is a compact city defined by imposing neoclassical monuments, museums, and performing arts venues. As the heart of US government and finance, it is home to the White House, the Federal Reserve, and the National Archives Building, which houses the US Declaration of Independence. Museums and other points of interest include the National Gallery of Art, the National Museum of Natural History, the National Air and Space Museum, the Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Washington Monument, and the Lincoln Memorial.
Submit Your Abstract for MASCC/ISOO 2016!

Share your research and best practices in diverse aspects of supportive care in cancer at our 25th Anniversary Meeting in Adelaide. This is an ideal venue in which to present your latest findings to the international community. See the abstract submission information, including topics, at www.mascc.org/meeting. The submission deadline is February 16th. Meeting registration is also open. Take advantage of early registration discounts!

Join us in celebration of our 25th Anniversary!

To register for updates on Adelaide, go to: www.mascc.org/meeting and enter your email!

New MASCC Members

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

- Manmohan Akhouri, India
- Jenny Arena, Australia
- Raymond Chan, Australia
- Nanna Fridriksdottir, Iceland
- Ruey Kuen Hsieh, Taiwan
- Muddasir Mohammed, United States
- Susan Murray, Australia
- Eloise Neumann, United Kingdom
- Dareneth Place, Australia
- Victoria Posternak, United States
- Britny Rogala, United States
- Vickie Shannon, United States
- Jonn Wu, Canada

Have any news items to share?

Please send contributions for the MASCC News to MASCCnews@mascc.org or to Tomi Clark, Editor at tclark@mascc.org

For more information please contact: Age Schultz, MASCC Executive Director: aschultz@mascc.org