Welcome to the July edition of the MASCC Society News

Message from Editors Anna Ugalde and Anna Boltong

In the July edition of the Society News, we share some stories on initiatives to reduce tobacco use globally. These are presented to recognize World No Tobacco Day, which was held on May 31 and to acknowledge the upcoming 16th World Conference on Tobacco or Health, which will be held in March 2015. We also bring two stories from very interesting MASCC members, Anita Nirenberg from the US and Linge Gowda from India. As always there are new MASCC members to meet and a list of some relevant publications by MASCC members. We look forward to hearing from you with your stories, achievements and other news for future editions.

From your editors, Anna & Anna

World No Tobacco Day

May 31st was World No Tobacco Day, an initiative of the Member States of the World Health Organization (WHO). World No Tobacco Day launched in 1987 to draw global attention to the tobacco epidemic and the preventable deaths and diseases from tobacco use.

For World No Tobacco Day 2014, WHO and its partners called on countries to raise taxes on tobacco. Nearly 6 million people die from tobacco-related illness each year, some 80% of the World’s 1 Billion tobacco users live in low- and middle-income countries, and only 8% of the world’s population live in countries with sufficiently high tobacco taxes. The “raise taxes on tobacco” theme generated hundreds of events around the world to spur governments to increase taxes on tobacco to levels that reduce tobacco consumption, and to support individuals and civil society organizations to encourage their governments to increase taxes on tobacco to levels that reduce consumption.

The WHO World No Tobacco Day webpage includes more information and coverage of 2014 events and promotions: http://www.who.int/campaigns/no-tobacco-day/2014/en/

World Conference on Tobacco or Health

As oncology professionals, as much as possible we must contribute to the fight to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with tobacco use. Please mark the date, and perhaps attend or encourage your colleagues to attend, the 16th World Conference on Tobacco or Health. This prominent event will be held in Abu Dhabi from 17-21 March 2015. The conference is a call for a collective resolution to fight tobacco through cohesion and integration of tobacco control in two broader health and development agendas for achievement of our common health and development goals. See the conference link for more details. http://www.wctoh.org/
Anita Nirenberg Awarded Oncology Nursing Society Award!

In this issue of our newsletter, we present our interview with Anita Nirenberg, William Randolph Hearst Professor of Clinical Nursing, Associate Director for Nurse Practitioner Specialties Hunter-Bellevue School of Nursing, Hunter College City, University of New York. Anita has recently been awarded the Oncology Nursing Society Lifetime Achievement Award. As a long-standing member of MASCC, she has presented at many meetings and has served on numerous MASCC committees.

**How are you involved with supportive care in your daily work?**

As a seasoned Oncology Nurse Practitioner, most of my career has been concentrated on delivering supportive care to cancer patients. I started out in pediatric oncology where we launched the Pediatric Day Hospital in the 1970s to deliver outpatient cancer therapies to children. We worked out a safe and effective method of treating osteogenic sarcoma patients (mainly adolescents and young adults) with high dose methotrexate with calcium leucovorin rescue on an outpatient basis. The patients were responsible for taking in enough oral fluids to put out >3000cc of alkaline urine in a 24-hour period in order to enable them to excrete the methotrexate.

Patient education was key, giving the patients an understanding of disease and treatment to predict and prevent lethal toxicities from occurring. I am proud every time I hear "pre-op neo-adjuvant chemotherapy" because that represents a huge part of my work.

**You were recently awarded the Oncology Nursing Society Lifetime Achievement Award. Can you tell us about this award?**

The Lifetime Achievement Award aims to recognize ONS members who have made outstanding contributions to the field of oncology nursing and to ONS; who have been important leaders within the Society and in their communities; and who exemplify the mission and core values of ONS (Integrity, Innovation, Stewardship, Advocacy, Excellence, and Inclusiveness). This Lifetime Achievement Award represents my contributions to care of cancer patients, and contribution to the profession through practice, research and education. It is an incredible honor. One of my 30 year survivors (treated at age 15 with neo-adjuvant chemotherapy and limb salvage surgery) was my guest at the award ceremony. Her attendance represented my "Lifetime Achievement"!

**What studies are you working on?**

I have been able to do clinical research and have several publications regarding the funded work that I've done in chemotherapy induced and febrile neutropenia. I just completed a study of the "Distress Experience in Women with Newly Diagnosed Breast Cancer", using the Distress Thermometer and the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale, repeat measures from first surgical consultation to post-operative, when some of the staging and grading of the tumor have been reported to the patient.

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Meet new MASCC Member, Joy Hills

I work as a Cancer Support Coordinator on the North West Coast of Tasmania, Australia with the Cancer Council Tasmania. This is a largely rural area that covers about one third of the state of Tasmania and includes some isolated areas in need of support.

I have worked in the cancer field for about nine years, first as an oncology nurse and now with the cancer council as a support coordinator and also have some experience in palliative care. It was through working in these areas and also undertaking postgraduate studies, that I began to realise the psychosocial and emotional support given to our clients (in this rural and remote region) was not as good as it could be. I am hoping to improve this vital aspect of the care given to people that have been affected by cancer. I joined MASCC, therefore, as a way of keeping up with what is going on around the world in regards to supportive care. I am very eager to discover different ways that I can touch the community and gain a better understanding of their needs through this role.
Helping Cancer Patients in Prisons

In this issue, we interview Linge Gowda, a MASCC member who provides palliative care to people in prisons.

What is your job title and where do you work?

I am a Professor and Head of the Department of Palliative Medicine at Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology, Bangalore, India. This is a regional cancer centre and is the second biggest in the country. Ours was the first cancer centre to use oral morphine to treat cancer pain in India, way back in 1988.

How you are involved in supportive care?

I have been working at Kidwai for the last 22 years and department head for the last 5 years. We get around 2000 new patients and 10,000 follow-up patients in our department every year. More than 80% of the patients come to our cancer centre with advanced stage disease and all of these patients will benefit from palliative care. These patients receive a range of cancer treatments and supportive care makes a significant difference. With the help of my team we are able to give good care to our patients. Additionally, I have been a member of MASCC for over 5 years.

Can you provide a summary of your interests, and work, around palliative care provision in prisons?

Though we were used to treating prison patients on an outpatient basis, we recently admitted a person for inpatient palliative care who needed to stay as an inpatient because it was necessary to titrate his oral morphine dose and to treat him with palliative radiotherapy. He was able to be admitted because the prison administrators are very supportive of giving good palliative care to their patients.

We have conducted two visits to the central prison to provide patient assessment and care. Currently we have admitted another patient with cancer of the esophagus, who is also very happy to be here with us. Unfortunately we are not able to keep patients in our ward for long periods and prison presents multiple issues for care provision. Most patients’ concerns are answered by our team. The care we provide is very diverse, for example, one of our yoga teachers is volunteering to teach yoga techniques in prison. We are working with the prison doctors to give good palliative care, and we consider this partnership to be important to provide the best care for patients in jail.

Meet new MASCC Member, Christopher J Schaber

I am the President and CEO of Soligenix, Inc. in Princeton, New Jersey, USA. Soligenix has a focus in supportive cancer care with a number of Phase 2 clinical trials testing compounds for the treatment of various cancer-related toxicities including oral mucositis, chronic gastrointestinal Graft-versus-Host disease, and acute radiation enteritis. I have decided to join MASCC as I have a role in initiating multiple clinical programs in supportive care in cancer. I hope to become active in the oral care study group.

Meet new MASCC Member, Margot Geuke

I am a dental hygienist in the Academic Medical Center (AMC) in Amsterdam the Netherlands. My role involves combining patient care with research.

I see a lot of haematology patients as cancer treatment can often contribute to patients developing oral mucositis. In order to assist as much as possible, I decided to do research in this direction. Right now we’re working on a oral cryotherapy study.

What appeals to me most about MASCC/ISOO is that they are very dedicated to research and education in all aspects of supportive care in cancer. I think it is very important to work together with different disciplines in order to provide best supportive care to people with cancer. The MASCC/ISOO makes this possible at the highest level. I always look forward to MASCC Annual Meetings where I hope to gain more experience and meet new people who work in oral care as well. This will give me the opportunity to learn from other oral care professionals.
Publications from MASCC members


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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