Welcome to the November Issue of the MASCC Society News

This month, we announce the newest member of MASCC’s Board of Directors and bring you news of a new MASCC Subgroup on Cross-Cultural Issues. An accompanying article highlights the need for cultural competence to reduce disparities in cancer and survivorship care. President Ian Olver discusses recent and future MASCC collaborations and stresses the benefits of membership. This issue also contains the final installment in our series of article summaries from the Spring issue of the EONS Magazine, this time an article by Alex Molasiotis, “Complementary Therapies in Cancer: A Global Perspective.” We include reminders of upcoming conferences. And we extend a warm welcome to the new members who joined us in September.

All issues of the MASCC Society News are available online at www.mascc.org/newsletters. Older issues (through August, 2016) can be found in the back pages of our journal, Supportive Care in Cancer.

~ Toni Clark, Editor

A Message from MASCC President Ian Olver

At the ESMO meeting in Copenhagen, Åge Schultz and I met with Jan Heybroek to begin planning for the MASCC Board’s Strategic Planning Meeting, which will take place at MASCC/ISOO 2017 in Washington, DC. One key issue will be that of growing our membership, thereby increasing the capability and impact of MASCC. It’s trite but true to say that, if each of us introduced a new member, MASCC’s membership would instantly double. But I do want to remind everyone that we have special rates for students and postdocs. Younger members can benefit greatly by becoming part of an international group that is influencing supportive care practice and policy.

The best way to become involved in MASCC is by joining one or more Study Groups. Study Group members can develop relationships with others who have common interests and participate in international projects in supportive care. I am delighted to see, in this issue of the Society News, that the Psychosocial Study Group has a new subgroup focusing on cultural disparities. The multinational nature of MASCC makes it an ideal organization to study and reduce disparities in supportive care, particularly as they affect patients in low-income countries.

Further to growing the membership, we had excellent support from the Japanese supportive care community at the Adelaide meeting. We continue to work with our Japanese colleagues and have just appointed Kazuo Tamura to the MASCC Board of Directors. Kazuo’s presence will enhance our relationship with the Japanese Society of Supportive Care in Cancer (JASCC), of which he is President. In addition, Rachel Gibson and I will visit Tokyo in January to assess the potential for a MASCC meeting there in 2021.

MASCC continues to work with other societies, including ASCO (Palliative Care in Oncology Symposium), ESMO, and EONS. We are also planning a joint session on Financial Toxicity with ONS at the 2017 MASCC meeting in Washington. I congratulate Snezana Bomjak for what promises to be a very successful Balkan meeting (December 2-3, Belgrade, Serbia). We are also exploring options for a “Best of MASCC” meeting in the Mexico or South America next year.

Finally, we are extending our social media presence and exploring possibilities for a web-based platform for educational videos. I am always pleased to receive ideas from members for new initiatives that will enhance the impact of MASCC!

Help Spread the Word of MASCC 2017 - Washington, DC

Visit our online Meeting Toolkit to download signature banners, ads, and PowerPoint “Save the Date” slides. Get the word out and help make MASCC/ISOO 2017 the best supportive care meeting yet!
Kazuo Tamura Appointed to MASCC Board of Directors

MASCC President Ian Olver is pleased to announce the appointment of Kazuo Tamura, MD, to MASCC’s Board of Directors. Kazuo Tamura is a Professor of Medicine in the Division of Medical Oncology, Hematology and Infectious Diseases, at Fukuoka University Hospital in Fukuoka, Japan, where he was Hospital Director from 2013 to 2015. He served as President of the Japanese Society of Medical Oncology from 2011 to 2014 and is currently President of the Japanese Association of Supportive Care in Cancer (JASCC), which aims to develop safe and effective supportive care, promote interdisciplinary research and education, and contribute to the national welfare of Japan.

Professor Tamura graduated from Kyushu University, Fukuoka, Japan. He completed his clinical training in internal medicine at Elmhurst General Hospital in New York, NY, and a medical oncology fellowship at Roswell Park Memorial Institute in Buffalo, NY. Professor Tamura’s major interests are cancer drug development and supportive care. He has published many scientific papers, most recently in the areas of febrile neutropenia, chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting, and geriatric assessment for the elderly with non-Hodgkin lymphoma. Kazuo is a member of MASCC’s Study Groups on Antiemetics and Neutropenia, Infection, and Myelosuppression.

All of us at MASCC extend a warm welcome to Kazuo and congratulations on his appointment to our Board of Directors!

New MASCC Subgroup on Cross-Cultural Issues

The Psychosocial Study Group has announced the formation of its new subgroup, which will focus on cross-cultural issues in supportive care. This initiative was sparked by conversations between group members Sandra Michiels and Patrick Crombez. With different professional perspectives, anthropology and nursing, Sandra and Patrick share experience in hematologic malignancies, and both recognize the complexity of multicultural interactions in daily cancer care. The need for the subgroup was strongly supported by Professor Jean Klastersky at the last MASCC Annual Meeting, for which the group is grateful, and endorsed by the Psychosocial Study Group.

The rationale for this project is that culture affects all aspects of the cancer experience. Citing the observations of MASCC member Antonella Surbone, former Chair of MASCC’s Psychosocial Study Group. Michiels and Crombez note that the meaning patients give to their cancer experience, their suffering, their treatment and the resulting behaviors are always filtered both through the grand narratives provided by different cultures as well as personal experiences and personalities. Excellent supportive care should involve awareness of the various ways in which culture, immigration, and ethnicity affect therapeutic transactions. Knowledge, skills, and attitudes about cultural differences lead to more effective clinical interactions, improve therapeutic outcomes, and decrease disparities in cancer care.

As a multidisciplinary and international society, MASCC provides a great opportunity to explore different perspectives, share knowledge, and promote cultural competence. It is expected that the cross-cultural subgroup will serve as a humanistic hub that will promote the exploration of contexts, experiences, and conceptual cross-cultural issues in cancer care.

One aim of the subgroup is to reinforce patient-centered care in line with a holistic approach, respecting specific needs and diversity of cultures and thereby improving patients’ and families’ quality of care. The subgroup will be proactive in designing interventions that promote cultural competence among cancer care professionals who interact with patients and colleagues from different cultural backgrounds.
The founders hope that the group will also serve as a resource for MASCC. For example, its members can help identify speakers and topics for scientific sessions, plenary sessions, and workshops at MASCC Annual Meetings. Michiels and Crombez have said that they also plan to undertake qualitative research on cross-cultural issues and thus expand the existing knowledge base in this area of study.

“We are convinced that cancer patients need a coordinated, multidisciplinary approach around cross-cultural dimensions of supportive care,” say the subgroup’s founders. “This focus could bridge the gulf between science and humane experience and help cancer patients benefit more equitably from supportive care.” Along with Psychosocial Study Group leaders, Lidia Schapira and Penny Schofield, Sandra and Patrick invite you to join this important new subgroup. The team is enthusiastic about contributing to the future of MASCC and helping to create a truly personalized approach to supportive care in cancer.

Sandra Michiels holds advanced degrees in Health Care System Management (EMPH), Political Sciences (MPS), and Anthropology (MAnth). She is Stem Cell Donor Search Coordinator at the Jules Bordet Institute, Brussels, Belgium. Patrick Crombez, AOCNS, MScN, RN, MHCM, MMCA, is Head Nurse, Expert Nursing Research & Development at the Institute. Jules Bordet Institute is a general hospital and research institute of the Université Libre de Bruxelles and is a comprehensive cancer center.

MASCC member Antonella Surbone has written often of the disparities in cancer care deriving from cultural differences and the challenges for clinicians. In an article published online on October 6, 2016 in Supportive Care in Cancer, Antonella Surbone and Michael T. Halpern discuss cultural and sociodemographic disparities in the cancer clinic and their implications for cancer survivorship care.

The number of cancer patients is on the rise worldwide, but so too is the number of cancer survivors. A large percentage of both groups are from underserved populations, and many of these people experience barriers to both treatment and survivorship care. Cancer patients from underserved populations are more likely to be diagnosed with late-stage disease and are less likely to receive high-quality care, resulting in worse outcomes and poor quality of life. Cancer survivors from these populations are also more likely to have persistent long-term negative effects of their disease and treatment on their health and quality of life.

Surbone and Halpern note that, “Disparities associated with differences in sociodemographic and cultural characteristics, such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, religion/spirituality, education, and socioeconomic status (SES), hinder access to and quality of survivorship care. Factors such as costs, insurance coverage, geographic and time accessibility, transportation, and difficulty navigating complex healthcare systems create additional barriers.”

Surbone and Halpern also stress that patients from underserved populations are less likely to enroll in clinical trials and are thus poorly represented in these and other research studies. And finally, most recommendations and guidelines for cancer survivorship care contain little or no specific information about the needs of patients from underserved populations.

There is a need for both research on, and professional understanding of, the disparities in care that derive from both socioeconomic and cultural differences. While socioeconomic factors are amenable to healthcare system interventions, clinicians have a key role in cross-cultural communication and culturally competent care that involves cultural beliefs and practices that can influence compliance, response to treatment, and satisfaction with survivorship care. An awareness of historical patterns of medical care in underserved communities and the barriers to cross-cultural communication are key skills required for supportive care throughout the cancer continuum.

Antonella Surbone


Antonella Surbone, MD, PhD, FACP, is a medical oncologist in the Department of Medicine, Division of Hematology & Medical Oncology, New York University Medical School, New York, NY, 10016, USA.

Michael T. Halpern, MD, PhD, MPH, is an associate professor in the Department of Health Services Administration and Policy, College of Public Health, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA, USA.
ASCO Palliative Care in Oncology Symposium

The 2016 Palliative Care in Oncology Symposium took place September 10-11 in San Francisco, California. This year’s theme was “Support of the Caregiver.” Main topics included immunotherapy, early palliative and supportive care, symptom management in radiotherapy and hematopoietic stem cell transplantation patients, global access to opioid medications, and chemotherapy compliance. Program faculty included MASCC members Eduardo Bruera, Petra Feyer, Ourania Nicolatou-Galitis, Charles Loprinzi, Eric Roeland, Thomas Smith, Stephen T. Sonis, Declan Walsh, and David Warr.

The meeting featured six networking roundtable discussions, one of which was on oral oncology. This session was chaired by Ourania Nicolatou-Galitis (ISOO President and Chair of the MASCC Bone Study Group), who attended the symposium as a MASCC representative. Discussion highlighted the contribution of oral supportive care in all phases of cancer patient care. The Symposium Steering Committee included Ourania Nicolatou-Galitis and the Program Committee included MASCC members Eduardo Bruera, Petra Feyer, Charles Loprinzi, Thomas Smith, and David Warr. Ian Oliver was a member of the News Planning Team.

For the 2017 meeting, ASCO has changed the Symposium name to include “Supportive Care!” The 2017 Palliative and Supportive Care in Oncology Symposium will be held October 27-28 in San Diego, California.

Research Priorities for CAM in Cancer Care

For its Spring 2016 issue, EONS Magazine* partnered with MASCC for a special section on symptom management and quality of life for cancer patients. The issue includes a guest editorial by MASCC Past President David Warr and articles by several MASCC members. This month, we include a summary of the article by Alex Molassiotis, “Complementary Therapies in Cancer: A Global Perspective.”

Many people with cancer supplement their treatment with complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). More than 10 years ago, Molassiotis et al. reported that one-third of all cancer patients in Europe used some type of CAM, primarily to manage symptoms or otherwise lessen the impact of cancer on their lives. The use of CAM has continued to grow around the world, despite the dearth of scientific support for many CAM therapies. Recently, several large and well-conducted trials have shown promising results: studies of acupuncture, acupressure, and breathing training on fatigue, psychosocial status, respiratory distress symptoms, and quality of life. Other studies have shown effects of mindfulness training, herbal therapies, and mind-body interventions.

It’s important to establish priorities for future research because funding is limited and competitive. Molassiotis notes that some “low-risk” CAM therapies, such as massage, may not require research before being used. But CAM therapies of questionable efficacy and those that carry possible safety or public health risks do need to be investigated further. While it is also important to determine placebo effects, Molassiotis notes that some placebo (sham) methods used in research may not be appropriate. Research methods must be improved in order to obtain reliable results. And some so-called therapies should always be part of good medical care: touch, talk, and time.

Using CAM therapies helps patients feel more control over their health and this, in itself, may be therapeutic. But also, patients need to be able to discuss their choices freely with their healthcare providers, who can guide them toward evidence-based practices and keep the lines of communication open.


Alex Molassiotis, RN, MSc, PhD is Chair and Professor of Nursing and Head of the School of Nursing, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, and Angel S.P. Chan Lau Endowed Professor in Health & Longevity, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. He has been Editor-in-Chief of the European Journal of Oncology Nursing since 2003. Alex serves on MASCC’s Board of Directors and is a member of MASCC’s Antiemetics and Fatigue Study Groups.

*The EONS Magazine brings the latest news about the European Oncology Nursing Society to its members. The EONS is a pan-European organization dedicated to the support and development of cancer nurses. Society programs help nurses develop skills, network with one another, and raise the profile of cancer nursing across Europe.
2016 MASCC/ESMO Antiemetics Guideline Update Available

The new MASCC/ESMO Guideline appears in a supplement to the September issue of Annals of Oncology and is available for free download. The guideline represents an update of the 2010 version and is based on the 2015 Copenhagen Consensus Conference with respect to the classification of the emetogenic potential of antineoplastic agents. The update adds 42 new drugs, many of which are orally administered.

The full-text versions of the 2016 MASCC/ESMO Consensus Recommendation papers from Supportive Care in Cancer (27, Suppl. 5, 2016), which reflect the conclusions of the 2015 Consensus Conference, are available, courtesy of MASCC and Springer.


See What You Missed in Adelaide!

MASCC/ISOO 2016 Annual Meeting Webcasts Now Online

Webcasts are available for all pre-conference Workshops, the Opening Ceremony, Plenary and Parallel Sessions, and ISOO Sessions. Go to Webcasts now. Member login required until January 2017.

MASCC at ESMO

More than 20,000 people attended the recent European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) Congress, October 7-11, in Copenhagen. The meeting featured a Supportive and Palliative Care educational session, “Prophylaxis and Treatment of symptoms in Oncology,” chaired by Karin Jordan and co-chaired by Fausto Roila. Karin Jordan also served on the 2016 ESMO Scientific Committee for the area of supportive and palliative care. Among others, participating MASCC members included Matti Aapro, Jann Arends, Sanatan Banerjee, Paolo Bossi, Petra Feyer, David Hui, Dorothy Keefe, Ian Olver, Bernardo Rapoport, Carla Ripamonti, Cindy Rittenberg, Florian Scotté, Florian Strasser, David Warr, and Li Zhang. MASCC also had an exhibit booth at the meeting.

The ESMO Congress is now held annually. The 2017 meeting will take place September 8 to 12 in Madrid, Spain.

REMEMBER: Participate in MASCC Study Groups!

If you are a new member and have not yet signed up for Study Group membership, be sure to do so. Participating in Study Groups is the best way to meet like-minded colleagues and get involved in MASCC activities. You can join up to three Study Groups, and you can change your membership at any time. Study Groups conduct literature reviews and surveys, organize and conduct research studies and educational projects, and develop practice guidelines. As a Study Group member, you can also help contribute by reviewing meeting abstracts and educational materials, monitoring your Group’s web page, and contributing helpful resources. Each year, several in-depth workshops, provided by one or more study groups, are presented at the MASCC/ISOO Annual Meeting. These well-attended workshops provide opportunities for participants to hear about the latest research, to share their own experience, and to meet colleagues with similar interests.

Start by taking a look at the MASCC web pages of Study Groups in which you’re interested or contact the Study Group leaders to ask how you can become involved in ongoing projects.

To select or change your Study Group membership, go to “My Account” and then “Edit My Profile.” Keep your Study Group memberships up to date in order to receive the latest communications and from Study Group Chairs.
**REMINDER • Upcoming Conferences**

**November 9-10, 2016**

2nd Annual Guildford Supportive Care in Cancer Course  
Royal College of Physicians, London  
£100.00 Discount for MASCC Members!  
[http://www.mascc.org/guildford-supportive-care](http://www.mascc.org/guildford-supportive-care)

**November 17-19, 2016**

SIOG Advanced Course: Phase 2  
Milan, Italy  
[http://www.sio.org](http://www.sio.org) OR [events@sio.org](mailto:events@sio.org)

**December 2-3, 2016**

The Regional Education Meeting on Supportive Care in Cancer Patients for Eastern European and Balkan Region  
Belgrade, Serbia  
[http://suppcare2016.fogg.rs](http://suppcare2016.fogg.rs)

**MASCC Member Options & Benefits**

Did you know…?

MASCC offers a range of membership levels and respective fees, including special rates for trainees, members from the developing world, and retirees. Become familiar with all of our membership options and benefits for yourself, as well as for your trainees and colleagues.

**New MASCC Members**

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

- Jane Fall-Dickson, US  
- Tetsuya Hamaguchi, Japan  
- Ramona Matei, Romania  
- Sulamita Miranda, Chile  
- Giulia Ottaviani, Italy  
- Cristhiam Mauricio Rojas Hernandez, US  
- Firozeh Samim, Canada  
- Anne Soderlund Schaller, Sweden

**Have any news items to share?**

*Please send contributions for the MASCC News to [MASCCnews@mascc.org](mailto:MASCCnews@mascc.org)*  
*or to Toni Clark, Editor at [tclark@mascc.org](mailto:tclark@mascc.org)*  

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