

CLINICAL ONCOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA 36TH ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING

AWARENESS, ACCESS, ACTION

The 2009 Clinical Oncological Society of Australia Annual Scientific Meeting again explored some very interesting and relevant aspects of cancer care on Queensland's Gold Coast, after being officially opened by Professor Jim Bishop.

In keeping with this year's theme, there was a strong focus on cancer awareness, including the success of preventative measures such as abstinence from smoking reducing the incidence of lung cancer over time as presented by Simon Chapman, the ongoing controversy surrounding cancer development from mobile phone use by Bruce Armstrong, and the incorporation of screening for psychological distress by Barry Bultz as the sixth vital sign.

Barriers to cancer care access were discussed. Cultural, financial and geographical barriers, including the delivery of care in non-urban Australia, as well as developing nations. Lynley Aldridge introduced the topic of care in patients from linguistically and culturally varied backgrounds. David Goldstein related the difficulties in servicing non-metropolitan centres. Nick Coatsworth led a panel of professionals with international experience in oncology care in developing countries.

Physical and supportive care action plans were presented by a quality international and local faculty. The topics spanned paediatric to geriatric oncology, molecular to clinical, with a number of tumour sites being represented, notably thoracic and neuro-oncology. Jacques Grill discussed long-term survivorship in paediatric tumours, while Catherine Terret

considered the evidence for therapeutic options in the elderly. Tony Mok gave a very energetic presentation on emergent therapies in lung cancer, while Norm Laperriere related stereotactic radiotherapy options in cranial and spinal malignancies. Dermot Ball and Christine Carrington provided guidelines for the safe administration of chemotherapy agents. Bernard Park and Kate Drummond outlined cardiothoracic and neurosurgical nuances.

There was reflection on the physical, financial and psychological burden of cancer, culminating in the Hot Topic Debate on Cancer Care Funding chaired by Jenny Brockie. Charlie Teo discussed the impact of repeat neurosurgery. Bruce Mann presided over a session concerned with the financial cost of cancer to the health system. Ian Olver presented the results of a trial investigating the impact of prayer on wellbeing. The involvement of allied health and community representatives was exemplary, especially in the social program. The Tom Reeve Oration was delivered by the incumbent winner of the award, Patsy Yates.

Congratulations are extended to all prize winners, in particular the Best of the Best and Luminous Awards. Thank you to all participants, including industry sponsors, for sharing your knowledge and experience, and the organising committee for their facilitation of this year's meeting – COSA is in good hands for 2010!

Art Kaminski
Local Convenor