

Sociobehavioural Oncology CONNECTIONS

The Newsletter of BCCA's Cancer Rehabilitation Network

Fall 2005

Improving Practice Standards for Interpreters

Interpreters are an integral part of facilitating communication between care providers and patients with Low English Proficiency at BCCA Lower Mainland Centres.

Between April 2003 and March 2004, Vancouver Centre received 1,806 requests for interpreter services and Fraser Valley Cancer Centre received 899.

Findings from work conducted by researchers at BCCA in 2004, indicate that interpreters feel that patients and health care professionals may not always be clear on the boundaries of interpreters' role. Consequently, situations arise where

the interpreters may be told important information when a health professional is not present, be asked by a patient for advice, or be asked by family members to withhold a cancer diagnosis from a patient.

Following these findings, Dr. Maria Cristina Barroetavena, Dr. Susan Cadell, Gina MacKenzie and collaborators from the Provincial Health Services Authority, Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health will explore practice dilemmas in a new research study called *Understanding the Current Practice of Interpreting: Implications for Policy Development*, which was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities

Continued on back page



Coping With Chemotherapy: Pilot Study Results

To reduce treatment side effects, patients receiving chemotherapy at Vancouver Centre were offered a free take-home resource called Self-Administered Stress Management Training (SSMT) during a pilot study called "Coping with Chemotherapy."

Preliminary data indicate that the take home resource is a well-accepted means of providing psychological support to patients. Just over 50% of new chemotherapy patients accepted the offer to use SSMT and signed out training packages from Patient and Family Counselling (PFC). 75% of patients who accepted SSMT indicated that it was 'very' or 'extremely' important to have the resource. 78% of patient accepting the resource had no previous experience with PFC.

Most importantly, researchers found that patients who were more stressed at the time of diagnosis chose to use the SSMT self-help tool and experienced benefit. Specifically, data indicated that patients who accepted the SSMT were significantly more anxious

before their first chemotherapy appointment than the patients who did not accept the SSMT. Patients using SSMT also reported a statistically significant reduction in anxiety after approximately 6 weeks.

Dr. Joanne Stephen will be seeking to replicate these results and develop the SSMT protocol for use in Community Oncology settings this fall. For more information contact her at jstephen@bccancer.bc.ca (604) 930-4055 x4505.



Dr. Joanne Stephen (right) and Research Student Femke Becht (left) worked with Nurse Educator Brenda Ross to offer patients access to Self-Administered Stress Management Training.

Newsletter Focus

Research in Practice

Share information and resources on research and clinical innovations.

Connect researchers, clinicians and administrators from across the country.

Build understanding about the sociobehavioural dimension of cancer.

Inside This Issue

1. Clinicians Trained for Online Support.
2. Financial Information for Cancer Patients.
3. Helping Kids Cope with Cancer.
4. And More...

Helping Kids Cope when a Family Member has Cancer



Many questions and emotions arise for children when a family member has cancer. They may wonder *What is cancer? Is my Mom or Dad going to die? When will they be back to normal?*

In Fraser Valley, Victoria and Kelowna, BCCA clinicians and researchers partnered with school board leaders in their respective areas to develop, conduct and evaluate workshops called *Helping Kids Cope when a Family Member has Cancer*.

While each workshop was designed to fit the needs of the local educators and counsellors, they were all focused on increasing the community's capacity to help children and families coping with cancer.

Workshop modules covered the use of art therapy; helping children grieve; supporting children with complex problems; children with cancer and creating a supportive school environment.

The workshop reached 36 school teachers, counsellors, child care workers and integration workers in the three sites. Plans are underway to develop the existing curriculum into a package that can be used across the province.

For more information contact Gina MacKenzie gmacken@bccancer.bc.ca



What is Knowledge Translation?

By Pat Nelson, NET Research Coordinator

Knowledge Translation (KT) is a term that we are hearing a lot about. It is a collaborative process where researchers, decision makers, clinicians, health providers, and families come together to exchange ideas, identify research questions, and share diverse perspectives.

The goal of KT is to create partnerships amongst knowledge producers and users so that research findings are put into practice.

This September, the BCCA led New and Emerging Team (NET) for Palliative Care in a Cross-Cultural Context is hosting a national workshop in Ottawa to discuss KT with experts and 30 stakeholders from across the country. The purpose of the meeting is to learn more about KT and to discuss how palliative care knowledge producers and users can share resources and collaborate.

Following the Ottawa meeting, the BCCA led NET will present their understanding of KT to clinicians, health professionals, and decision-makers. We will invite people to work with us and identify palliative care issues that emerge from their experiences in the health system.

When knowledge users become involved in the research process they become "*champions of change*" assisting researchers in being relevant and timely, and leading others in effective knowledge uptake.

For more information contact Pat Nelson at pnelson@bccancer.bc.ca (604) 877-6000 ex. 3270.

Clinicians trained for Online Support



Glenda Christie, Karen Flood and Shelley Gordon, clinicians from BCCA's Patient and Family Counselling, joined clinicians from Alberta and Manitoba to learn how to facilitate online psychosocial support groups. The 10 week program was conducted in collaboration with The Wellness Community, a US based cancer support centre.

Online trainees presented their experiences to a group of national stakeholders in a June meeting hosted by BCCA and the Canadian Strategy for Cancer Control.

There was consensus that online communication can provide a meaningful and therapeutic form of support to patients and their caregivers.

Online discussions, which typically last an hour and a half, can touch deep emotions at times, but can also remain at a level of practical information sharing and friendly support, depending on the circumstances of the session and the choice of the participants.

Through the training sessions, clinicians learned how to put their mental process into words, how to state assumptions and how to frame questions and observations related to their communication experience online in order to more effectively facilitate the session.

Following their presentation, clinicians partnered with researchers to explore opportunities for testing the effectiveness of online support. In August 2005, the national team submitted a project proposal to the Canadian Breast Cancer Research Alliance which could fund them to test the online intervention with young and rural women with breast cancer. Preliminary funding results will be announced September 30th 2005. Online training is continuing this fall with a new group of Canadian clinicians.

News Flash

Does ethnicity predict place of death?

SRC research student Michael Regier completed masters work looking at the relationship between ethnicity and place of death in British Columbians who died of cancer. He found that ethnicity and language have predictive utility.

He will continue to explore novel statistical methods to understand the role of culture in end-of-life health service utilization in his PhD work with the BCCA New and Emerging Team for Palliative Care in Cross Cultural Context.

Psychoeducation for Women with Gynaecological Cancer

Findings from a pilot study conducted by Dr. Lori Brotto, SRC Research Associate and Assistant Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, indicate that a psychoeducational intervention is effective and feasible in improving sexual response, reducing distress, and increasing quality of life for women survivors of gynaecological cancer. Women treated for cancer by hysterectomy are encouraged to contact study coordinator Yvonne Erskine at (604) 875-4111 X 68901 or UBCwomenshealth@vch.ca to participate in a new project that will test the effectiveness of the intervention, alone or with Viagra, with a larger population using randomization.

Now Available

Patient Navigation in Cancer Care: Final Report

The SRC led research team found that navigation works differently in diverse settings and can be enacted by different professionals. Specifically, navigators will differ in how they provide emotional and informational support, reflecting their professional training, their patient population, and the specific health system context in which they operate.

The term "Patient Navigation" denotes a system or professional role primarily intended to expedite patient access to services and resources, and improve continuity and coordination of care.

The pilot project worked on developing a conceptual model for navigation and methodological tools for testing the intervention's effectiveness. A full report and a summary version are available on the SRC web site at www.bccancer.bc.ca/RES/SBR/

New Resource



Financial Information for Cancer Patients

Diagnosis and treatment of cancer can be a financial burden for patients and families. Unexpected loss of income and increased costs related to travel and accommodation during cancer treatment can cause financial and psychological stress.

The booklet *Financial Information for Cancer Patients* was compiled by Helen Wong, a social worker at Vancouver Island Patient and Family Counselling. It contains information on financial resources available across the province, and can be used as a reference guide by both clinicians and patients.

The booklet will be available for download on the BCCA web site in Fall 2005. In the meantime, please contact Helen Wong hwong2@bccancer.bc.ca (250) 519-5529 for an electronic copy.

Introducing



Dr. Glynis Marks, Community Education Counsellor. Joining BCCA in July 2005, Glynis is working in the Fraser Valley Cancer Centre and connecting with clinical staff, patients, families, caregivers and communities around the Lower Mainland. In the newly created Community Education position, Glynis will develop and implement educational resources and programs for psychosocial oncology based on evidence and best practice. She brings over 17 years experience as a registered psychologist working in hospital, rehabilitation, school and community settings.

Dr. Joanne Stephen, Research & Clinical Practitioner. Many of you already know Joanne through her former role as a researcher at the Sociobehavioural Research Centre (SRC). Joanne joined the Patient and Family Counselling staff at Fraser Valley Cancer Centre in July 2005. In her new role as Research and Clinical Practitioner, she will develop new programs for patients and families, work with clinicians to conduct intervention research, and continue her relationship with the SRC.

Interpreters continued from front

Research Council (SSHRC). The study will focus on interpreters' experiences and practice dilemmas within the context of the *Standards for Health Care Interpreting*, which guide interpreter's conduct. It will use a novel methodology to videotape patient-clinician-interpreter sessions at BCCA, including 6 clinical consultations in Vancouver and 6 in Fraser Valley involving Chinese and Punjabi speaking interpreters respectively. Findings will inform policy makers about the relevance of current standards and training curricula for medical interpreters. The ultimate goal is to enhance patients' outcomes through improved patient-provider cross-cultural communication.

BCCA care providers including oncologists, radiotherapists and nurses interested in participating in this study are encouraged to contact Dr. Maria Cristina Barroetavena, principal investigator, at mbarroet@bccancer.bc.ca or (604) 877-6000 x2185.

Upcoming Events

Psychosocial Oncology Rounds

Join us from 12:00-1:00pm every 2nd Wednesday for lunch time learning. Videolink to all 4 cancer centres. Location (TBA) dhass@bccancer.bc.ca

Nutrition Oncology Lunch & Learn

Join us from 12:00-1:00pm on the 3rd Wednesday of every month for lunch time learning by teleconference. afinrite@bccancer.bc.ca

Kaleidoscope: Dialogue & Diversity in Hospice

Palliative Care. Conference of the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association. September 25th-28th, 2005. www.chpca.net/events/conference.htm

1st International Cancer Control Congress. Hosted by the Canadian Strategy for Cancer Control, Public Health Canada and co-sponsored by the World Health Organization. October 23rd-26th, 2005. <http://www.meet-ics.com/cancercontrol/>

BCCA Annual Cancer Conference. Conference of the BC Cancer Agency. November 3rd-5th, 2005. www.bccancer.bc.ca/HPI/AnnualConference

Psychosocial Session @ the Annual Cancer Conference

- **Guest Speaker Dr. Grace Christ.** *The Family in the 21st century- How the impact of cancer on families has changed (tentative).*
- **Learn how to use the P-SCAN - a psychosocial screening tool for cancer patients.**

Find Us on the Web



Connections Newsletter

<http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/RES/SBR/News/>

Sociobehavioural Research Centre

<http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/RES/SBR/>

Nutrition Oncology

<http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/HPI/NutritionalCare>

Psychosocial Oncology

<http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/PPI/CancerTreatment/SupportCopingwithCancerIntroduction/>

Cancer Rehabilitation Network

BCCA's Cancer Rehabilitation Network coordinates regional cancer centre activities for patient and family counselling, psychiatry, and nutrition services. The Rehabilitation Network also works with host hospitals to provide speech pathology and physiotherapy services. Community activities with practitioners are provided through the psychosocial oncology and nutrition oncology networks. Translational research is conducted by the Sociobehavioural Research Centre.

Sociobehavioural Research Centre

Working within the Cancer Rehabilitation Network and with community partners, BCCA's Sociobehavioural Research Centre's (SRC) mission is to provide leadership on quality of life issues by generating, disseminating, and facilitating uptake of an evidence-based understanding of cancer patients' physical, psychological, social, cultural, nutritional, informational, spiritual and practical needs.

Subscribe !

Sign up to receive Connections Quarterly Newsletter in print or PDF format. Send your name, address and subscription request to mmyles@bccancer.bc.ca

More Information

This newsletter is published quarterly. To submit a story idea or to learn more about Cancer Rehabilitation Network's activities please contact:

Merissa Myles
Sociobehavioural Research Centre
BC Cancer Agency
#200-601 West Broadway
Vancouver, BC V5Z 4C2
T: (604) 877-6000 ex. 3274
F: (604) 708-2091
E: mmyles@bccancer.bc.ca
<http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/RES/SBR/>