

SUMMARY OF CLINICAL PROFESSIONAL DAY

OZPOS/PoCoG



OZPOS in collaboration with POCOG and the COSA Survivorship Group successfully obtained funding for the 4th Psycho-Oncology Professional Day. It was held as a half-day workshop immediately prior to the COSA 2014 ASM in Melbourne, attracting more than 100 registrants. The broad aims of the day provide a multidisciplinary forum for discussion of psycho-social practice issues, new data and emerging research questions, and to provide an update on progress of the clinical pathways for distress screening. It also provides opportunities for networking and peer-support.

Over the past few years POCOG has been leading work to develop a Clinical Pathway to support routine screening for distress (anxiety and depression) in cancer populations. It has been clear from implementation projects and research around the world that screening without a clear referral pathway in place is suboptimal. Consequently, POCOG has led a review of the evidence to support a pathway and the development of a Delphi consensus statement and guide clinical pathway. This work is ongoing and attendees were updated on these activities and plans for the next 12 months. Associated with this work were two submitted abstracts discussing why oncology outpatients who report distress decline help, and whether or not needs assessment increases discussion of psychosocial concerns for people with advanced cancer. Both highly complex and pertinent issues.

A wonderful array of proffered papers addressed issues of current concern to patients and psycho-oncology health professionals alike. The abstracts discussed unmet needs in specific tumour groups, including haematological and high grade glioma patients. A thought-provoking discussion of a pathway to support indigenous patients in navigating the healthcare system emphasised the need for appropriate connections. The patient experience was well covered with a presentation regarding changes in perception of self in women with ovarian cancer, and another reporting the impact of hospital admissions on physical function and quality of life of patients. A final topic covered the educational materials used in radiotherapy, here the comprehensiveness of materials was considered and found wanting. There is room for improvement in preparation of materials.

Once again, the Clinical Professional Day provided an opportunity for networking and discussion over breaks and drinks, with few of our members coming together regularly at a national level, this is invaluable. It gave us the chance to discuss the themes of the day and ongoing concerns regarding practice and research with a view to determine what can be done to better support psycho-oncology health professionals.

OZPOS wishes to thank COSA for generously providing funding for this Psycho-Oncology Professional Day. OZPOS thanks PoCoG for the provision of additional funding to support the day, including conducting evaluation. The major organisational and administrative contributions of Joanne Shaw, Joanna Fardell and Melanie Price from PoCoG is especially acknowledged and appreciated.

Laura Kirsten
Chair, COSA Psycho-oncology Group, OZPOS