

## Clinical Skills for Cancer Pharmacy Practitioners Course

### A report to COSA

The third 'Clinical Skills for Cancer Pharmacy Practitioners' seminar, organised by the Cancer Pharmacist Group (CPG) of Australia, was held on the weekend of the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2010. This course was supported in part by the COSA Professional Day Grant. This report forms part of the conditions of the grant.

The course was fully booked with 50 attendees from across Australia and 7 speakers. The course was aimed at pharmacists who are already working in the area of cancer but have less than 2 years experience. It combined informative lectures with interactive workshops to enable pharmacists to enhance their skills and abilities in the many processes involved in providing cancer treatment to our patients. Topics on day 1 were themed into cancer therapy in clinical practice sessions which included the *Principles of Chemotherapy & Targeted Therapy*, *the Common Side Effects of Chemotherapy & Targeted Therapy*, *the Management of these Side Effects* and *Understanding Chemotherapy Protocols*. Pre reading was also provided to participants as a background to cancer and its treatment and the pharmacology of chemotherapy and targeted therapy. Day 2 consisted of interactive workshops on lung cancer, lymphoma, colorectal cancer and breast cancer with case studies used to direct key learning points around the management and treatment of these tumour groups. The attendees were encouraged to actively participate in all discussions and workshops. A welcome reception was held on the first day to enable participants, speakers and sponsor representatives to meet, network and relax. This was extremely well attended by the many participants and proved to be an enjoyable evening.

Throughout the course attendees were be given presentations and guidance from experienced cancer pharmacists. The speakers were; Christine Carrington (*Princess Alexandra Hospital, Brisbane, Queensland*), Jim Siderov (*Austin Health, Melbourne, Victoria*), Ben Stevenson (*APHS Pharmacy, Adelaide, South Australia*), Jude Lees (*Royal Adelaide Hospital, Adelaide, South Australia*), Lesley Dawson (*Mater Health Services, Brisbane, Queensland*), Dan McKavanagh (*Princess Alexandra Hospital, Brisbane, Queensland*), Dan Mellor (*Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, Melbourne, Victoria*). These pharmacists were chosen for their vast knowledge and experience in the area of cancer pharmacy practice and their skills and ability at teaching and running workshops.

A total of 34 (68%) course evaluation forms were returned, enabling the CPG to assess the benefits and relevance of the course. The overall course and the individual sessions were all rated as very good to excellent. The majority of participants agreed that the content of the course contributed to their continued professional development, was relevant to their current practice and would recommend the course to colleagues and staff.

Suggestions were made on future courses which included extending the duration of the course to include more topics and running a course aimed at more experienced pharmacists. All materials and presentations for the course were supplied prior to the course via a secure website to enable participants to either print copies of the presentations or view electronically. This proved to be a valuable method of disseminating the course materials as both a cost saving and as an 'environmentally friendly' initiative.

Following the continued success of the seminars, the CPG are planning to run a fourth course early in 2011.

The CPG would also like to express our thanks to COSA for the professional day grant, and all our industry sponsors who contributed to the sponsorship of this event; Roche, Amgen, GSK, Baxter, Pfizer, and Sanofi Aventis. A more detailed version of the course program can be found on the COSA website within the Cancer Pharmacists Group webpage section on continuing professional development and education.

**Jim Siderov**

**Chair of the Cancer Pharmacists Group**