



KELOWNA PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT & AWARENESS GROUP

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MERRY CHRISTMAS

Our special guest presenter in November was *Dr. Ross Halperin*, the Regional Medical Director of the BC Cancer Sindi Aluwahlia Hawkins Cancer Centre in Kelowna. He gave all of us a very informative and educational PowerPoint presentation on PET/CT. The fundraising for our own state of the art PET/CT has been completed and construction is slated to begin in the spring of 2019.

His presentation mentioned that CT and MRI primarily "see the lump or tumour" whereas the PET/CT "sees the lump as well as "what's going on inside the lump or tumour."

What is PET/CT? It is an oncologist's dream imaging machine because the PET/CT anatomically shows the lump and makes them easy to find and define. It is also able to determine what's in the lump, and able to discern "sinister" lumps from others and can tell the oncologist if therapies are effective.

Over 90% of the clinical use of PET/CT is for cancer. PET/CT is used for diagnosis, staging, treatment and follow up. At the present time the cancers where PET/CT plays an important role - include Brain, Breast Carcinoma, Gastrointestinal, Gynecologic (cervical), Head and Neck Cancer, Lung, Lymphoma, Melanoma, Sarcoma, Undiagnosed solitary lung nodule, Testicular Carcinoma and Thyroid Carcinoma.

PSMA PET - Recently *prostate-specific membrane antigen (PSMA)* has been acclaimed as a distinct target in PCa. Its expression is 100-1000 times more in PCa cells. Level of expression is directly proportional to Gleason score, androgen independence, metastasis and progression. It can also show a high clinical value for lymph node staging and detection of local recurrence.

PSMA PET is currently only available in BC as a clinical trial in Vancouver. Will PSMA PET be available in Kelowna in the future that remains to be seen as the Gallium 68 only has a physical half-life of 68 minutes and that makes the delivery of sufficient tracer activities to remote centers challenging.

Last year over 9,000 PET/CT scans were done in the two PET/CT scanners at the Cancer Centre in Vancouver and this number is really fewer than required.

Prostate Cancer Canada and the Movember Foundation Announces \$4M in Research Grants -

The following is an excerpt of information that was sent to me by Krista Clement the Librarian at BC Cancer Kelowna and originated in Toronto.

Prostate Cancer Canada and the Movember Foundation announced on Oct. 23, 2018 \$4 million in funding to three Canadian researchers to predict how well prostate cancer will respond to treatment, based on men's biological markers, specifically in their tumour cells and blood - opening a path to more personalized care with fewer side effects and a better chance for survival. The grants have been awarded to *Dr. Tarek Bismar* from the *University of Calgary*, *Dr. Hansen He* from the *University Health Network* and *Dr. Kim Chi* from *BC Cancer Vancouver*. This research aims to determine how we can use a man's tumour biology to offer better care to men at three critical stages of their prostate cancer journey.

"Today, we can't effectively identify how well men will respond to treatment. If we can understand that, we can select the best option for the prostate cancer a man has. Drs. Bismar, He and Chi will search for markers in a man's tumour biology and genetics to help determine the severity," says Stuart Edmonds, Vice President, Research, Health Promotion and Survivorship Prostate Cancer Canada. "These researchers understand that predicting outcomes at various stages of the disease will solve a significant problem for treating prostate cancer effectively - improving outcomes and avoiding unnecessary treatments that have significant side effects and are expensive."

Dr. Tarek Bismar, University of Calgary will study *low-risk* prostate cancer that has not spread outside the prostate and is likely to be slow growing. Active surveillance can allow men to delay or avoid aggressive treatments like radiation and surgery and their subsequent side effects.

Dr. Hansen He, University Health Network will study men diagnosed with cancer that has not spread outside the prostate and is classified as *intermediate-risk*, meaning there is a higher likelihood it will grow more quickly than the low-risk disease.

Dr. Kim Chi, BC Cancer Vancouver will study men with *advanced* prostate cancer, which has spread to other parts of the body, and is currently incurable. Using an approach called liquid biopsy, Dr. Chi will use markers from blood tests, to determine which treatment option will work best for men with advanced prostate cancer. In its final testing stages, if this trial is successful, the results could have an immediate impact on how men are treated.

Anonymous Donor Gives \$18.3M to B.C. Cancer Foundation

The following is an excerpt of an article that appeared in the *Vancouver Sun* by *Pamela Fayerman*.

A donor who has given the BC Cancer Foundation \$18.3 million insists on remaining anonymous.

The foundation will not even say whether the philanthropist is alive or dead. But the individual has given the foundation a total of \$29 million over their lifetime, including the latest amount.

"The donation is the second-largest individual investment in cancer for our organization or for our province that we are aware of, and one of the top donations to cancer in Canada," said Sara Roth, President and CEO of the foundation.

The gift will be used to establish a molecular imaging and therapeutics program utilizing "smart" drugs called radiopharmaceuticals (radioactive particles that deliver highly concentrated treatments to cancerous cells). The radioactive isotope treatment has been used in medical imaging and to treat thyroid cancer for many years, but only more recently has the radionuclide therapy expanded to other types of cancer, particularly incurable prostate cancer.

The treatment is said to work by breaking bonds in cancer cell DNA. In studies, researchers have shown they can pair isotopes with a protein or antibody that specifically targets cancer cells. The molecule searches for cancer cells and then binds to them, allowing the radioactive therapy to attack.

Some B.C. patients have, in the past year, gone to Germany for such treatment since it wasn't available here. Experts caution the treatment is not a miracle but offers patients with untreatable cancers more hope.

The drugs used in such treatment are not unlike the radiotracer isotopes used in cancer imaging - energy-emitting

atoms that make tumours light up during imaging tests such as PET or CT scans. Isotopes used in imaging tests, however, don't have therapeutic drugs attached to them, while radiopharmaceuticals do.

Dr. Francois Benard, B.C. Leadership Chair in Functional Cancer Imaging, said the funds would be used over the next five years to scale up the imaging and therapeutics program so that clinical trials can be conducted using isotopes loaded with drugs that bind specifically to cancerous sites in the body of patients with cancer that has spread.

The radioactive drugs - some of which will be made in Vancouver at Triumf and at BC Cancer - are injected into a patient's veins; the treatment is then distributed throughout the body, zeroing in on detectable cancerous cells.

Benard said there are about 90 people working in the molecular imaging department now, but he expects the donation will enable BC Cancer to acquire new equipment, plus hire another 20 to 30 scientists, physicists, and research assistants. He said he learned about the donation only a few months ago.

The first research trial to be led by BC Cancer will be a multi-centre study across Canada using such therapy. About 200 prostate cancer patients who have failed conventional treatment will be recruited for the trial beginning sometime in 2019.

The November meeting of the Kelowna Prostate Cancer Support & Awareness Group also marked a milestone as it was our 22nd. Anniversary Meeting. Our first meeting was held in November 1996.

WITT'S WIT (ON THE LIGHTER SIDE) -

God Loves Drunks Too

A man and his wife were awakened at 3:00 A.M. by a loud knock on the door.

The man gets up and goes to the door where a drunken stranger, standing in the pouring rain, is asking for a push.

"Not a chance, says the husband, "it's 3:00 in the morning!"

He slams the door and returns to bed.

"Who was that?" asked his wife.

"Did you help him?" she asks.

"No, I did not, it's 3AM in the morning and it's bloody pouring rain out there!"

"Well, you have a short memory, " says his wife. "Can't you remember about three months ago when we broke down, and those two guys helped us?"

"I think you should help him, and you should be ashamed of yourself!"

"God loves drunk people too you know."

The man does as he is told, gets dressed, and goes out into the pouring rain.

He calls out into the dark, "Hello, are you still there?"

"Yes," comes back the answer.

"Do you still need a push?" calls out the husband.

"Yes please!" comes the reply from the dark.

"Where are you?" ask the husband.

"**Over here on the swing,**" replied the drunk...

The Kelowna Prostate Cancer Support & Awareness group does not recommend treatment modalities or physicians: However, all information is fully shared and is confidential. The information contained in this newsletter is not intended to replace the services of your health professionals regarding matters of your personal health.

The Kelowna Prostate Cancer Support & Awareness Group would like to thank Janssen - manufacturer of Zytiga® - Abiraterone for their support in producing this newsletter.



UP COMING MEETING DATES FOR 2019 -

January 12, February 9, March 9, April 13, May 11, June 8.

Meeting Location:

Our meetings take place in the Harvest Room at the Trinity Baptist Church located at the corner of Springfield Rd. and Spall Rd. enter through the South Entrance. The meeting begins at 9:00 A.M. Doors open at 8:30 A.M.

