



## SUPPORT GROUP MEETING UPDATES

Thank you to everybody who attended our February meeting with our guest speaker Rosamond (Ros) Mortimore, creative arts therapist. Members were privileged to learn how an art therapist can facilitate the creative process to help with the expression and release of trauma, sadness, and stress in an individual. Thankfully, an individual does not need to have any artistic skills and need not interpret his/her artwork to anybody, hence all members enjoyed an opportunity to participate in the Mandala workshop. Based on her personal illness experience as well as the experience of many others, Ros argues that "Art therapy can result in an enhancement of physical and emotional wellbeing, resilience, self-insight and feelings of joy". If you are interested in learning more about creative art therapy, please contact Ros on 0407 502 598 or artchick2@gmail.com.

Next meeting  
Saturday 28 March  
1 pm - 3 pm  
4-12 Blackwood St,  
North Melbourne  
Dr Addie Wootten: Clinical trials in  
gynaecologic oncology

*Our next meeting will be held on Saturday, 28 March 2009, between 1 pm – 3 pm at BMDI House. This meeting will be a combination of a peer-support group and educational meeting.*

*Dr Addie Wootten, from the Royal Melbourne Hospital, will speak about the issues that anybody participating in a clinical trial should consider before providing informed consent. In addition, Jo Wallis will be there to offer remedial massage to our members.*

As announced before, due to the Anzac Day, we will not meet in April, but two times in May as per the following schedule:

Saturday, 2 May 2009, 12 pm - 3 pm, (lunch included) Jackie Wise, counsellor: Emotional Wellbeing Workshop.

For catering purposes, please register with Bharati Kalle on 9905 4049 or Bharati.Kalle@med.monash.edu.au

Saturday, 30 May 2009, 1 pm - 3pm, Margaret Lowden, Mercy Hospital for Women: Chemotherapy for women with gynaecological cancers

Saturday, 27 June, 1 pm - 3pm, Dr Jan Pyman: The pathology of gynaecological cancers

## CANCER RESEARCH UPDATES

### Benefits of massage

Many scientific studies have been conducted on the effect of various bodywork techniques on people undergoing cancer treatment, particularly chemotherapy and surgery. Scientific research shows that massage can reduce pain, fatigue, anxiety, depression and nausea. Other benefits may include improvements in sleep, neuropathy (nerve damage or disturbance), quality of life, mental clarity, alertness, and meaningful social interaction.

Mili and Natalie are pleased to announce that a qualified massage therapist, Jo Wallis, will be available at our monthly meetings to provide massage – free of charge – to our members. Much of Jo's work is treating and supporting people living with cancer and she has recently relocated her business back to Melbourne from Warburton where she was the Shiatsu Therapist for the last two years at The Gawler Foundation. No bookings required.

### Coping with cancer after a natural disaster

When a natural disaster occurs, people affected by cancer can face additional hardships, practical difficulties and complex emotional reactions. Feelings of shock, disbelief, anger and despair are common and past grief related to cancer can resurface and cause further emotional pain and distress. People affected by cancer may also be facing added grief from the emotional reactions of their own experience and that of their family, friends, and the wider community. Information, practical advice and emotional support can help people to cope with additional difficulties they may face. The Cancer Council Helpline, 13 11 20, can support Victorians dealing with cancer in the aftermath of a natural disaster. Understanding Cancer Nurses staff the helpline and are specifically trained to listen and provide emotional support. They can also provide information and link people to a wide range of support services.

The Cancer Council understands that people's needs and emotional reactions to their specific experience will vary widely; cancer nurses can individualise support to address caller's needs and concerns. Call 13 11 20 to speak to a cancer nurse today.

### Interns' cancer knowledge

A recent research study conducted by Barton and colleagues (2003), published in the Medical Journal of Australia, investigated the cancer knowledge and skills of interns in 2001 with those who participated in a similar survey about 10 years before that. The study participants were recruited from medical graduates from all universities in Australia and New Zealand undergoing orientation as interns in teaching hospitals. Recent graduates have less exposure to cancer patients by comparison to those who trained in 1990. Significantly more graduate medical program (GMP) interns incorrectly believed that the age at which a woman was at greatest risk of cervical cancer was in her 30s. In contrast,



there was no difference in relation to interns' knowledge on the survival rates for women with ovarian cancer. Interns who graduated from graduate medical program (GMP) courses were compared with those who graduate from non-GMP courses. The results demonstrated that interns from GMP courses felt more competent than those from non-GMP courses at discussing death, breaking bad news and advising on smoking cessation, but less competent at preparing a patient for a hazardous procedure

## **IN AND AROUND MELBOURNE..**

### **BreaCan Events**

**BreaCan Events** are held at BreaCan, Ground Floor, Queen Victoria Women's Centre, 210 Lonsdale St, Melbourne. If you would like to know more about activities for women with advanced gynaecological cancers, please call Josie Scott, activities Coordinator, on 1300 781 500 as well as for information or booking for any of the following:

#### **Understanding Palliative Care?**

**(A session for women living with advanced disease only)**

**Monday 23rd March, 12.00pm to 1.30pm**

The focus of palliative care is on managing symptoms and quality of life, including physical, emotional, spiritual and social support. Dr Scott King, Palliative Care physician from Wantirna Health, will explain the services available and answer any questions. You will also have an opportunity to meet women with advanced cancer who will speak about the benefits they have experienced through accessing palliative care services.

#### **'Here and Now' program for women with advanced cancer**

'Here and Now' is an 8-week program co-facilitated by two experienced professional group leaders. The weekly sessions are conducted either face-to-face or via phone and offer an opportunity to discuss issues such as grief and loss, intimacy and talking with friends.

#### **Introductory Hand & Foot Reflexology Sessions**



Reflexology is a system of health care, incorporating mind, body and spirit and may help those living with cancer. Please contact BreaCan that can explain how you can access an appointment with Jennifer Rigby, reflexologist and registered nurse.

### **Gawler Events**

#### **Help yourself, Help the CFA**

In response to the tragic Victorian fires, The Gawler Foundation is organising a CFA Fundraiser via a day workshop presented by Ian Gawler. Ian will be sharing relaxation, stress management and meditation techniques. The date is Saturday 21 March at 10.00am to 4.00pm. You are warmly invited and encouraged to attend, or to sponsor someone who is disadvantaged to attend, or to simply make a donation. All staff are donating their time, the day is at The Foundation's Yarra Junction Centre and every dollar received will go directly to the local CFA. The cost to attend is \$100 and all of this will go to the CFA. Call 5967 1730 for bookings.

### **University of Melbourne Public Lectures**

**Thursday 26 March, 6:00 pm - 07:30 pm**

**Location: The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute Lecture Theatre, 1G Royal Parade, Parkville**

**Talk 1: Improving Cancer Treatments - The Hunt for Blood Cell Regulators by Professor Donald Metcalf, Cancer and Haematology Division, WEHI**

**Talk 2: Improving Cancer Treatments - The Blood Cell Regulators in the Clinic: Research discoveries that have re-written the medical textbooks**

Every day of our lives we need to produce billions of new blood cells to prevent infections and this need increases when we are being treated with chemotherapy. We do this by using stem cell populations scattered throughout the bones of our body. How is this amazing production controlled? The discovery of the Colony Stimulating Factors (CSFs) required thirty years of painstaking effort.

This family of chemical messengers regulates blood cell formation and moves blood stem cells out of the bones and into the blood. To date, around eight million people undergoing cancer chemotherapy have had their blood cell formation stimulated by treatment with the CSFs. Discoveries in this vital area continue to be made for the tremendous benefit to cancer patients.

Refreshments to follow lecture. For reservations please phone Rosie on 9345 2555

### **Melbourne International Comedy Festival** **Luke's got cancer**

**2 - 26 April, Thu-Sat 10.45pm, Sun 9.45pm**

**Duration: 50 minutes**

**Venue: Melb Town Hall - Lunch Room, Cnr Swanston & Collins Sts, Melbourne**

**Prices: Full \$15, Concession \$12, Group (6 or more) \$10, Preview \$10, Tightarse Tuesday \$10**

In 2007, at the tender age of 22 and in the infancy of his stand-up career, Luke Ryan (WA Raw State Finalist 2008) was diagnosed with cancer, for the second time. This was not, it's safe to say, how he saw his year panning out. Not being one to let a life-threatening illness get in the way of a burgeoning hobby, Luke saw a sterling opportunity to try out some new material. As it turns out, cancer can actually be funny!

Who would have thought... From being first diagnosed with cancer at the age of 11 to his current state of semi-remission, Luke takes you on a uniquely funny journey through the all too common experience of living with cancer. All proceeds are being donated to the Peter MacCallum Foundation too, so now you can feel even better about laughing in the face of cancer. Bookings Ticketmaster 1300 660 013 & at the door.

**For information about our group contact:**

**Natalie - 0431 825 943 / Bharati - 9903 4049 / Milica.Markovic@med.monash.edu.au or visit**

**<http://www.med.monash.edu.au/spppm/research/sshr/gcsg/>**