



From the PoCoG Executive Office

The PoCoG Executive Committee Election

In July, Professor Phyllis Butow, PoCoG Chair, called for nominations for the election of three Executive Committee members. Nominations closed on 21st August. We are pleased to advise that we have received ten nominations from the membership. All PoCoG members will have the opportunity to vote for three of the nominees online between the 7th September and 9th October 2009. The three nominees who receive the highest number of votes will be invited to join the Executive Committee in November. Instructions on how to vote will be emailed to the membership on the 7th of September 2009.

The Election Candidates are (in order of date nomination was received):

- Dr Jeremy Couper
- Professor Brian Kelly
- Dr Carrie Lethborg
- Professor Suzanne Chambers
- Associate Professor Bettina Meiser
- Dr Jaklin Elliott
- Ms Julie Garrard
- Dr Ben Britton
- A/Prof. Rod O'Connor
- Prof. Kate White

We would like to wish all nominees the best of luck in the election.

PoCoG is now a centre of the University of Sydney

Since its inception in 2005 PoCoG has called the University of Sydney its home alongside its Chair Professor Phyllis Butow who is a long-standing member of the academic staff of the School of Psychology. PoCoG draws enormous advantages from its location within the university by utilising its administrative and financial infrastructure.

PoCoG's position within the university

however was never formalised. Earlier this year the Executive Committee deemed that this situation put PoCoG in a vulnerable position and decided to take steps to secure PoCoG's position by applying to become an official centre of the University of Sydney. We are happy to report that the application was successful.

Although PoCoG's day-to-day operations and activities will not be affected there will be some changes to the governance and branding policies of the organisation.

The details of these changes will be outlined in PoCoG's policy and procedures manual in the coming weeks.

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Research and clinical service interface.

OZPOS and PoCoG Psycho-oncology Professional Day

The OZPOS and PoCoG Psycho-Oncology Professional Day is only two months away. The Professional Day aims to bring together researchers and clinicians working in the field of psycho-oncology to consider initiatives to promote quality cancer care and to share ideas so that research is clinically meaningful. It will also provide an opportunity for clinicians to gain access to innovative research ideas.

The Professional Day is a satellite event to the COSA Annual Scientific Meeting and will be held on Monday 16 November 2009 at the Gold Coast Convention Centre.

All PoCoG, OZPOS and COSA members as well as other interested individuals who are registered for the COSA ASM are welcome to attend. Please note that early bird registrations for the COSA ASM have been extended until Monday the 14th September 2009.

In addition to hearing from our international speaker Professor Barry Bultz, the day will provide a professional forum for oral presentations from OZPOS and PoCoG members who may not otherwise get the chance to present their work at the COSA ASM. Presentations will be selected from abstracts submitted to the COSA ASM but not

accepted for an oral presentation. Our goal is to provide the widest possible forum for the excellent Psycho-Oncology research being conducted in Australia. Authors of successful abstracts will be invited to present at the professional day in early October.

The professional day will conclude with the launch of the PoCoG Psycho-oncology Outcomes Database (PoD). The database will provide free access to information about HRQoL, psychological, social, satisfaction and needs measures commonly used in cancer research.

For more information and updated program outline, please visit the PoCoG website <http://www.pocog.org.au/content.aspx?page=ozpospocog>

8.30 to 9.30am	Plenary presentation by International speaker. Professor Barry D Bultz, PhD, R.Psych, Director, Department of Psychosocial Resources and Program Leader: Psychosocial Oncology, Supportive, Pain and Palliative Care, Tom Baker Cancer Centre, Calgary, Canada. Professor Bultz will provide an overview of the national implementation of screening for distress in Canada. There will be opportunities to discuss the relevance of such initiatives in Australia.		
9.30-10.00am	Morning tea		
10.00am -12.00pm	Research presentations 1 Oral presentations	Research presentations 2 Oral presentations	Clinical workshop 1 Topic to be confirmed
12.00 -12.30pm	Lunch		
12.30 - 1.30pm	Implementation and Outreach Workshop and panel discussion The aim of this session is to explore practical issues of service delivery with a multidisciplinary group of professionals working in the area of psycho-oncology.		
1.30 - 2.00pm	Afternoon tea		
2.00 - 4.00pm	Clinical workshop 2 Topic to be confirmed	Research presentations Oral presentations	
4.00 - 4.30pm	PoCoG Annual General Meeting		
4:30 – 5:30pm	Launch of the Psycho-oncology Outcome Measures Database		





News from current PoCoG Studies

The CALD co-ordinating Office

Unmet needs study (Phase 2)

Recruitment continues in New South Wales for our population-based study exploring unmet needs, quality of life, psychological distress and patterns of care in Chinese, Arabic, Greek and English speaking cancer patients. To date, we have received questionnaires from 78 Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) patients. Preliminary results for NSW and the results of systematic literature reviews will be presented at COSA 2009. We will be commencing recruitment in the Queensland Cancer Registry in September and the Victorian Cancer Registry very soon.

Unmet needs study (Phase 3) -within the first year of diagnosis

This is a companion study to our registry-based Unmet Needs Study. The registry study only

captures survivorship issues as patients are recruited at least 1 year post diagnosis. This new CALD study is co-funded by Cancer Australia and *beyondblue* for 3 years. It aims to capture CALD patient experiences in the active treatment phase. Recruitment will be at 13 hospitals/clinics across New South Wales and Victoria. Our team has been working on ethics applications and setting up the study.

Prognosis study

Currently, our team is committed to data analysis. The first batch of results has emerged from qualitative analysis on interview data with 76 patients and 72 family members. We are hoping to share our findings at the COSA 2009 conference. Coding and analysis of audio taped consultations is ongoing.

The PoCoG Pilot Study Grant

PoCoG is offering Pilot Study Grants to support the development of intervention studies in psycho-oncology through the generous funding of the COSA Enabling Grant. PoCoG is calling for expressions of interest from members who are currently involved in psycho-oncology research and are planning to develop a psycho-social intervention trial for submission to the NHMRC funding round in 2010 or 2011.

More information, including the application form and Pilot Grant guidelines are available on the website by following the links from the member homepage after you log in.

Closing date: Wednesday 30 September 2009

ANZGOG Symptom-Benefit Study

The first stage of the Ovarian Symptom-Benefit Study is well underway. PoCoG is conducting the quality of life component of this study in collaboration with ANZGOG and the Gynaecologic Cancer Inter-Group. The ultimate aim of this project is to determine the benefit of palliative chemotherapy to women with recurrent ovarian cancer, and to develop a prognostic index to predict who will benefit. As an important first stage, we are first determining how best to measure benefit in this context. As part

of this stage, Professor King is interviewing patients about their quality of life and experience of ovarian cancer and treatment. Since June, she has interviewed a further four patients, giving a total of seven patients interviewed so far of a target sample of 20. The research team met in July to plan the analysis methods for Stage One. Preliminary descriptive analyses of data from the first 25 patients will be conducted in September.

Testicular Cancer Survivorship study update

Site specific approval has been received for the testicular cancer survivors study and testicular cancer-specific quality of life questionnaire validation sub-study to be implemented in NSW and Victorian centres. Both studies will be rolled

out in these centres during August. Ethics applications to conduct the study in centres from Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia are in progress.



News from the Quality of Life Office

Two Quality of Life (QoL) Office projects are approaching their final stages. Dr Tim Luckett and Mayumi Oguchi have been working on a Cancer Institute NSW commissioned review of patient-reported outcomes for health-related quality of life (HRQoL), anxiety, depression and distress, with a view to making recommendations for choice of measures. A draft was submitted in late August. Also, Stacey Gelgor has collated HRQoL data routinely collected at the Cancer Therapy Centre at Liverpool Hospital for use in Phase 1 of the development of multi-attribute utility instruments from the EORTC QLQ-C30 and FACT-G (MAUCA study). This study is being funded by a Cancer Institute NSW Innovation Grant.

The Quality of Life Office has been involved in a number of activities with other cancer cooperative trials groups (CCTGs) since June. Professor Madeleine King, the Cancer Australia Chair in Cancer Quality of Life, attended the Australasian Leukaemia and Lymphoma Group (ALTG) Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) in Melbourne in June and the Australian New Zealand Breast Cancer Trials Group (ANZBCTG) ASM in Darwin in July. Madeleine and Tim also participated in the inaugural Australian and New Zealand Urogenital and Prostate Cancer Trials Group (ANZUP) HRQoL and Supportive Care teleconference in July.

The QoL Office will be involved in a number of new studies over the coming months.

The Patient Preferences Substudy (ANZ) - Adjuvant Lapatinib and/or Trastuzumab Treatment Optimization (PANZ-ALTTO) has received discretionary funding from the ANZBCTG. Preparations are well underway for a pilot study to be completed by the end of the year, in collaboration with the ANZBCTG. Ethics applications have been submitted.

Also, the QoL Office, in collaboration with Australia New Zealand Gynaecology Oncology Group (ANZGOG), has recently submitted an application for a Cancer Institute NSW Research Innovation Grant for a proof-of-concept project for the use of computer adaptive testing to assess patient-reported outcomes in Australian clinical oncology settings. This project will draw on the innovative resources of Patient Reported Outcome

Measurement Information System (PROMIS) developed by the USA National Institute of Health (NIH).

Update on QoL Advisory Group Meeting

In late July, the QoL Office held a teleconference with members of the Quality of Life Advisory Group to review its strategic plan. Norman Thompson, who has been serving as the consumer representative on the Advisory Group, has decided to step down to spend more time on personal commitments. The QoL Office would like to thank Norman for his valuable contributions to the Group over the past two years. PoCoG has submitted an application to Cancer Voices for two new consumer representatives to join the QoL Advisory Group as soon as possible.

QoL Resources

The QoL Office has been in discussion with Dr Monika Janda of the Queensland University of Technology about making FACT-G normative data available on the PoCoG website. Once developed, this resource will enable PoCoG members to interpret their results from the FACT-G in light of scores by the QLD general population. We'd also be delighted to hear from researchers from other states who have large, representative normative datasets, using the FACT-G or other widely used instruments such as the EORTC QLQ-C30 that we could summarise on our website.

The PoCoG PoD

Soon to come on our Website

The PoCoG POD or Psycho-oncology Outcomes Database is in its final stages of development and will be launched at the OZPOS/PoCoG professional day at the COSA ASM on the 16th November 2009.

The database will provide free access to information about HRQoL, psychological, social, satisfaction and needs measures commonly used in cancer research. There will also be a breakfast session workshop on Tuesday 17th November to demonstrate the practical aspects of this great new resource.



Welcome to the new biostatistician, Dr Dan Costa

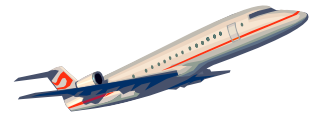
We are pleased to announce that we have been successful in filling the position of PoCoG biostatistician. PoCoG's biostatistician is primarily responsible for advising and assisting with analysing data produced by PoCoG protocols. However, the statistician will also be available to provide statistical advice to all Australian and New Zealand PoCoG members on a limited basis and time permitting. This statistical advice will normally take the form of answering members' questions regarding the best ways to analyse a data set or conducting power and sample size calculations for members. Currently each member is entitled to a maximum of 6 hours free advice per year with any additional input incurring a charge of \$120 per hour. Please note that these arrangements may change according to demand. On-going support and long-term involvement in studies should be

negotiated with the PoCoG Executive Office.

Dr Daniel Costa is undertaking the role of the PoCoG biostatistician four days per week until early 2010. In February 2010 Dr Melanie Bell will begin work in this role full-time.

To request statistical advice email brief background information about the study and the advice you seek to the statistician (details below). The statistician will then email you with an estimate of the likely timeframe in which he will be able to provide the advice which will depend on internal PoCoG commitments and the complexity of the advice sought. Dan will be working Tuesdays to Thursdays and can be contacted on:

Ph: (02) 9351 6304 Fax: (02) 9036 5292 Email: pocogbiostats@psych.usyd.edu.au.



The PoCoG Travel Reimbursement Scheme 2009

TRS 2009-Round 3

The Psycho-oncology Co-operative Research Group is offering the Travel Reimbursement Scheme (TRS) (formerly PoCoG Travel Grants) to support the ongoing professional development of cancer researchers and health professionals in the discipline of psycho-oncology. The aim of Round 3 of the TRS 2009 is to facilitate PoCoG members to attend the PoCoG/OZPOS professional day and the COSA ASM 2009. All TRS applicants for this round must therefore be registered for the PoCoG/OZPOS professional day as well as at least one day of the COSA ASM. Please note that early bird registrations for the COSA ASM have been extended until Monday the 14th September 2009.

The TRS guidelines and registration form are

available to members by logging on to the PoCoG website using your username and password and following the links from the member homepage.

Opening date: Monday 7 September 2009

Closing Date: Monday 28 September 2009

TRS 2009- Round 2

TRS 2009 Round 2 is open until 25 September 2009. The special round of the TRS aims to assist PoCoG members to attend the Concept Development Workshop of Investigators conducted by the NHMRC Clinical Trials Centre at the University of Sydney with the support of The Outreach Program. For more information in this round of the TRS, please visit the member's section of the PoCoG website.

Call for Abstracts

The *Cancer Council Australia* and the *Cancer Council Western Australia* are calling for abstracts for the 10th Biennial Behavioural Research in Cancer Control (BRCC) Conference entitled the 'Behavioural Research Leading Chronic Disease Control'. The conference will be held from Wednesday 14 – Friday 16 April, 2010 at the Esplanade Hotel Fremantle, Perth, Western Australia.

Abstracts are invited for papers on a range of behavioural research in cancer control and chronic disease-related issues including:

- innovative research methods;
- translation of research to policy/practice;
- program evaluation

For more information, please visit www.cancerwa.asn.au/research/brcc2010 or email BRCC2010@cancerwa.asn.au

Abstracts for the conference must be submitted by Friday 13th November 2009.



👁 In Focus - Distress named as Sixth Vital Sign in Oncology

An announcement recently released by IPOS naming 'distress' as the 6th Vital Sign in Oncology

Barry D. Bultz
IPOS Board Member
June 20, 2009

At the IPOS 2009 Board Meeting in Vienna, members unanimously endorsed the concept that Distress be named the 6th Vital Sign in Oncology. In routine medical practice Vital Signs are utilized by health professionals in order to assess basic functioning. Vital signs are an essential part of patient's case presentation and generally include: Body Temperature, Pulse (or heart rate), Blood pressure, and Respiratory rate. In 1999, due to the significant impact on patients, Pain was endorsed as the 5th Vital Sign.

Prevalence rates of Distress in cancer patient populations have been well documented in the literature. The impact of distress on cancer patients, families and the community is a primary concern for clinicians, scientists, educators, and IPOS.

Distress as the 6th Vital Sign was first endorsed by the Canadian Strategy for Cancer Control in 2004. The concept of naming Distress as the 6th Vital Sign has gained much support and has been published in Journal of Clinical Oncology, the Journal of Psycho-Oncology, and the Journal of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network to name but a few. IPOS believes that endorsing Distress, as the 6th Vital Sign will raise awareness of Distress as an essential component of the patient experience and will act as a call to action for care providers and the health care system as a whole.

Psycho-Oncology News

Depression and Cancer

Yvette Pollard

Manager, Research and Policy, *beyondblue*

Depression, anxiety and related states of distress occur commonly in people with cancer. *beyondblue*: the national depression initiative is concerned that this be addressed - that is, that they are recognised and adequately treated. *beyondblue* seek to raise awareness in the community and amongst health professions, and to see an increase of research in the area.

Toward this aim, *beyondblue*, in partnership with *Cancer Council Australia*, will be sponsoring and editing a special issue of the *Medical Journal of Australia* devoted to Depression and Cancer. *beyondblue* are seeking expressions of interest from people who have completed research in the area that may be ready for publication soon, and who wish to submit it to the MJA.

Researchers who have suitable material are invited to submit a short description (in the format of a structured abstract) to Professor David Clarke, *beyondblue* Research Advisor, for consideration.

From submissions, *beyondblue* will select a number of papers that showcase quality Australian research in the area. Authors will then be invited to submit the completed papers to *beyondblue* (by 6 November 2009), after which they will be peer reviewed in the usual way.

Please make initial submissions to Professor David Clarke by COB Friday 18 September 2009 at research@beyondblue.org.au





Workshops

NHMRC CTC Concept Development Workshop for Investigators

The NHMRC Clinical Trials Centre in collaboration with The Outreach Program, is holding a concept development workshop for suitably qualified investigators who have an idea for a clinical trial. The workshop will provide information, advice and guidance on how to develop a concept outline from an initial idea or clinical question as well as further tips and hints on developing your proposal into a funding application and full study protocol.

Workshop Details:

Registrations close on 10th September 2009. The workshop flyer and registration form are available on the PoCoG website:

<http://www.pocog.org.au/content.aspx?page=ClandCTCcdw>

Date: Friday 25 September 2009, 9am - 5pm
 Cost: \$100 (PoCoG members are encouraged to apply for R2 TRS 2009)
 Venue: Medical Foundation Building Auditorium
 92 94 Parramatta Rd
 Camperdown NSW 2042

MOGA's 4th biennial Australia and Asia Pacific Clinical Oncology Research Development (ACORD) Workshop

The Medical Oncology Group of Australia (MOGA) is pleased to announce the 2010 Australia and Asia Pacific Clinical Oncology Research Development (ACORD) Workshop. This Workshop provides comprehensive training in clinical trials design and access to a world-class expert faculty for participants from any cancer related specialty from Australia, Asia Pacific and beyond. Fellowships are available for participants to cover travel and accommodation expenses.

Workshop Details:

More information, including the ACORD 2010 brochure is available on the MOGA ACORD Workshop website:

www.acordworkshop.org.au

Date: 12th – 18th September 2010
 Registrations: 7th December 2009 – 26th February 2010
 Venue: Novotel Twin Waters Resort
 Sunshine Coast, QLD.

New online seminar available on the PoCoG website!

IPP-SHR Podcast:

Being Truthful, Nurturing Hope: Doctors' Communications with Cancer Patients

Published on the IPP-SHR website 14th August 2009



The International Program of Psycho-Social Health Research (IPP-SHR), CQ University has kindly donated Michael Bouwman's interview with Dr Geraldine Leydon, Alderbrook Health Centre, University of Southampton, United Kingdom to PoCoG. The interview focuses on communication patterns between oncologists and their patients during consultations. This podcast is now available on the Online Seminars page of the PoCoG website:

<http://www.pocog.org.au/content.aspx?page=Seminars>

More IPP-SHR podcasts are available at
<http://www.ipp-shr.cqu.edu.au/podcasts/>

To subscribe to the IPP-SHR podcast mailing list and receive a direct link to psycho-social podcasts as they become available, go to
<http://www.ipp-shr.cqu.edu.au/podcasts/subscribe/>





Who is Who of PoCoG



Name:

Jose A. Mosquera

Position:

Psychiatrist, SOLCA
Cancer Hospital, Quito-
Ecuador

Research Interests:

The possible
relationship between
personality traits and
cancer

Tell us about yourself:

I am almost 54 years old. I have been a physician since 1980 and a psychiatrist since 1987. I have worked in the Cancer Hospital since 1990.

One thing you enjoy most about your work:

Supporting the patient and their family in times of crisis

Your professional/ psycho-oncology/ research pet hate:

Administration

Your favourite motto/ quote:

I am happy to move a grain of sand; I let the politicians move the mountains.

Which book have you read most recently?

Many Lives, Many Masters

Your first ever job:

Intern in a Psychiatric hospital

What advice would you give to someone commencing in the same line of work as yours?

You can learn anything, but it's better if you have a "born" inspiration, it's easy to do this work in that way. Here in Ecuador you have first a friend to help anytime, and second, a colleague to work with in this special psycho-oncology area



Useful Resources

The Health Talk Online website allows you to share in consumer's perspectives of health, a variety of different illnesses and involvement in clinical trials.

<http://www.healthtalkonline.org/>

Positions Vacant

Database Administrator, Part-time

The Cancer Prevention Research Centre in the School of Population Health at the University of Queensland is seeking a part-time Database Administrator.

For more information, please visit
<http://www.pocog.org.au/content.aspx?page=Other%20jobs>

or contact Professor Neville Owen:

n.owen@uq.edu.au

or A/Prof Liz Eakin:

e.eakin@uq.edu.au

CeMPED Research Nurse, Part-time

The Centre for Medical Psychology and Evidence-based Decision-making (CeMPED) is currently seeking a skilled and dedicated part-time Research Nurse for a new NHMRC-funded research project examining the effect of a nurse and oncologist intervention to promote discussion about prognosis and end of life issues in patients with advanced, incurable cancer.

For more information, please visit

<http://www.pocog.org.au/content.aspx?page=Other%20jobs>



Key Dates September – November 2009

Palliative Care Australia

Thursday 24th – Sunday 27th September 2009
Location - Perth Convention Exhibition Centre
<http://www.conlog.com.au/palliativecare2009/>

Concept Development Workshops for Investigators

Friday 25th September 2009
Flyer and application form available at:
<http://www.pocog.org.au/content.aspx?page=ClandCTCcdw>

Australian Society for Breast Disease

Thursday 1st – Saturday 3rd October 2009
Surfers Paradise Marriott Resort, Queensland
<http://www.asbd.org.au/meetings.php>

ASSG 2009 ASM Sarcoma Management towards 2020

Saturday 17th and Sunday 18th October 2009
Princess Alexandra Hospital Ipswich Road,
Woolloongabba, Brisbane
<http://www.australiansarcomagroup.org/news.html>

Supportive Care Conference

19th October 2009
RACV Club, Melbourne
http://www.wcmics.org/WCMICS-news.html#news_details

RANZCR/AIR/FRO/ACPSEM Scientific Meeting

Thursday 22nd October – Sunday 25th October 2009
Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre
<http://www.csm2009.com/>

Inaugural Whole Person Care National Symposium

Friday 30th – Saturday 31st October 2009
Swiss Grande Bondi Beach, Sydney
<http://www.iceaustralia.com/wholeperson09/index.html>

Dignity Conserving Therapy Workshop

Monday 2nd – Tuesday 3rd November 2009
Swiss Grande Hotel, Bondi Beach, Sydney
<http://www.iceaustralia.com/wholeperson09/register.html>

Australasian Leukaemia and Lymphoma Group ASM

Thursday 12th – Friday 13th November 2009
Melbourne, VIC
<http://www1.petermac.org/allg/NewSite/>

COSA Annual Scientific Meeting

Tuesday 17th- Thursday 19th November 2009
Gold Coast Convention Centre
http://www.asnevents.com.au/cosa/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=24&Itemid=41

Oncology Social Work Australia

Friday 20th – Saturday 21st November 2009
Brisbane, QLD
<http://www.oswa.net.au/news-and-events/oswa-workshops-and-conferences/>

Surviving Cancer in Body, Mind, Spirit

Thursday 26th – Saturday 28th November 2009
Otago Museum, Dunedin
<http://www.ponz.org.nz/pages/conference.html>

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