



3rd Annual Gerald Bronfman Centre Symposium and Awards Ceremony December 2, 2013

The 3rd Annual Gerald Bronfman Centre (GBC) Symposium and Awards Ceremony took place on December 2, 2013. The themes of the first two symposia in 2011 and 2012 were cancer control and basic cancer research respectively. To celebrate the GBC's 22nd anniversary, this year's symposium focused on psychosocial oncology and how patients cope throughout their cancer experience. The keynote speaker was **Dr. Linda Carlson** from the University of Calgary, followed by psychosocial oncology researchers in the McGill Department of Oncology, **Drs. Carmen Loiselle** and **Zeev Rosberger**. Following the lectures there was a question and answer session moderated by palliative care physician, **Dr. Bernard Lapointe**.

Dr. Carlson spoke about her research involving an 8-week Mindfulness-Based Cancer Recovery (MBCR) intervention which includes mindfulness, relaxation, gentle yoga, cognitive coping strategies, personal empowerment and social support. Results have shown that the intervention leads to improvement in (i) a range of symptoms (e.g. stress, mood, sleep worry); (ii) biological functions (e.g. blood pressure, inflammation); and (iii) psychological well-being (e.g. quality of life, spirituality, overall mindfulness). In the MINDSET study, Dr. Carlson compared the Mindfulness-Based Cancer Recovery intervention with the Supportive Expressive Therapy (SET) intervention in distressed breast cancer survivors. She found that the MBCR group showed greater improvement in mood, stress and quality of life compared to the SET group and these benefits were maintained over a 12-month period.

Dr. Loiselle's talk focused on her research looking at patients' preferences for obtaining cancer information. She found that while many patients are eager to learn more about cancer and therefore are proactive in finding information, others prefer not to seek out information on their own. Patients can obtain information from their health care providers, from peers or on their own perhaps via the computer. Dr. Loiselle discussed her research using one such electronic means, the Oncology Interactive Navigator (OINTM). When this tool was used with breast/prostate cancer patients there was improvement in physical quality of life and satisfaction with the information and with oncologist informational support. Health care providers thought the tool was beneficial from the standpoint of the information it provided and its potential to enhance patient communication with the health care provider and with family members. However, they acknowledged some limitations such as time constraints, content updates, and patient access to and proficiency with computers.

As a veteran in the field of psychosocial oncology, Dr. Rosberger took a historical journey looking at how this aspect of cancer care has evolved at McGill and how clinical and research advances have improved the patient experience. The detection of distress in cancer patients is one area that is continuously evolving. Dr. Rosberger talked about the research done on the Nucare intervention which showed that coping skills training reduces distress, although it is dependent on the timing and diagnosis. Furthermore, for patients with breast cancer the intervention was shown to be more effective on an individual basis rather than in a group setting. Dr. Rosberger also discussed his research looking at factors which influence a decision to be vaccinated against HPV to prevent the development of cervical cancer. Knowledge about HPV and the vaccine, attitudes and beliefs, social influences, health care provider recommendation and personal experience with cancer all play a role in the decision of whether or not to vaccinate. Dr. Rosberger moved on to discuss the psychosocial oncology services provided by the Louise Granofsky-Psychosocial Oncology Program at the Segal Cancer Centre of the Jewish General Hospital,

and tools used to screen for distress. Work is ongoing to integrate distress screening in routine clinical practice.



Drs. David Eidelman (Dean of Medicine), Zeev Rosberger, Linda Carlson, Carmen Loisselle, Bernard Lapointe, Eduardo Franco

Following the symposium Department of Oncology Chair, **Dr. Eduardo Franco**, presented the following awards: Research & Clinical Service to **Dr. Luis Souhami** (radiation oncology), Teaching & Mentorship to **Dr. Lawrence Panasci** (medical oncology), Academic, Clinical & Research Support to **Ms. Annie Rompré** (Administrative Coordinator, Segal Cancer Centre) and Lifetime Achievement Awards to **Drs. Henry R. Shibata** (surgical oncology) and **Neil MacDonald** (Cancer Nutrition Rehabilitation Program).



Dr. David Eidelman (Dean of Medicine), Ms. Annie Rompré, Drs. Lawrence Panasci, Henry Shibata, Luis Souhami, Neil MacDonald, Eduardo Franco