Several experts from Memorial Sloan Kettering’s 65+ team shared their research with a global audience of geriatrics and oncology healthcare professionals at the 2015 Annual Conference of the International Society of Geriatric Oncology (SIOG). The group has more than 1,000 members in more than 40 countries around the world. SIOG’s goal is to nurture the development of healthcare professionals in the field of geriatric oncology to improve treatment for older adults with cancer.

The annual conference, which was held last November in Prague, is the leading meeting for experts in geriatric oncology and features presentations and lectures from the world’s top authorities. The event provides a unique platform for researchers, clinical practitioners in oncology, geriatricians, radiologists, psychologists, nutritionists, nurses, and senior cancer survivors’ advocates to learn, interact, and share results and best practices. It also lays the groundwork for important improvements in treating senior adults with cancer.

The title of the 2015 conference — “Geriatric Oncology and Supportive Care: A Global Approach to Advance the Science” — recognized the key role that supportive care plays in the management of these patients. Members of MSK’s 65+ team participated in the lectures, presented posters, and served on the board:

- Beatriz Korc, Chief of the Geriatrics Service, chaired the oral abstract session “Clinical Implications of Geriatric Assessment Treatment Guideline” and was an invited speaker for the plenary session.

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Conference

“Hot Topics in Supportive Care: Cognitive Impairment and Delirium.”

• Medical oncologist Stuart Lichtman chaired two sessions, “Drug Interactions in Older Cancer Patients” and “Practical Aspects of the Multidisciplinary Care of Older Adults with Cancer.” He is also serving as the President Elect of SIOG and will lead this year’s annual conference, to be held in Milan, Italy, from November 17 to 19.

• Medical oncologist William Tew was an invited speaker for the session “Multidisciplinary Management of Older Patients with Cancer: The Vital Role of Supportive Care” and gave a lecture titled “Supporting the Older Woman with a Gynecological Malignancy.” Dr. Tew was also elected Track Leader for the Scientific Program Committee, and the National Representative of SIOG for the United States.

• Paul Hamlin, Chief of Basking Ridge Medical Oncology Service and Clinical Director of the Lymphoma Outpatient Unit was an invited speaker for the oral abstract session “Decisional Tools in Malignant Hemopathies” and gave a lecture on a current clinical trial studying the impact of chemotherapy in older patients with diffuse large B cell lymphoma.

• Medical oncologist and geriatrician Armin Shahrokni presented his poster “Older Patients with Localized and Metastatic Gastrointestinal Cancer: Who Is at Risk for Dying Within One Year After Surgery?”

• Geriatric nurse practitioner Heidi Yulico presented her poster “Geriatric Nurse Practitioner Telephone Interventions in Elderly Women with Advanced Ovarian Cancer.”

PATIENT RESOURCES

Coping Strategies for Prostate Cancer Patients

More than 200,000 men in the United States are diagnosed with prostate cancer every year. How they combat this disease medically is up to their medical teams and influenced by the latest research. But how they psychologically combat the worry, practical concerns, and changes in their lives falls to the patients as well as their family members and caregivers.

In his new book, Managing Prostate Cancer: A Guide for Better Living, MSK psychiatrist Andy Roth (left) teaches patients strategies to deal with the physical and emotional complications of the disease that can affect their quality of life.

Dr. Roth helps men at all stages of the disease learn the best ways to accept and adapt to the physical complications of urinary, erectile, or bowel dysfunction; fatigue; hot flashes; and the demoralizing recurrence of disease after treatment. These skills and strategies, which he terms “emotional judo,” also help healthcare providers improve support for patients and their families. His book is readable and relevant and is one of the few books to focus on the emotional implications of physiological symptoms and life changes written by a mental-health caregiver.

For the past 21 years, Dr. Roth has served as an attending psychiatrist and as the psychiatry liaison to the Medical Genitourinary Clinic at MSK. He specializes in psychological support for cancer patients.

65+ Team Spotlight

Nurse practitioner Sincere McMillan and hematologic oncologist Armin Shahrokni were awarded the Hartford Change Agents Action Award for their project “Bridging from Novice to Knowledge: Implementing a Geriatric Oncology Curriculum for Nurse Practitioner Students.”

Beatriz Korc presented a poster titled “The Role of a Geriatrician in a Cancer Center” at the Cancer Survivorship Symposium: Advancing Care & Research in San Francisco in January 2016.

Geriatricians Koshy Alexander and Beatriz Korc together with nurse practitioner Jessica Goldberg, and Drs Armin Shahrokni, Stuart Lichtman, and radiologic oncologist Abraham Wu authored two chapters in: Clinics in Geriatric Medicine; Geriatric Oncology, 32, (1), (Rao, V. & Cohen, H., Eds). http://v.gd/r7EFTj

Beatriz Korc and Armin Shahrokni published the article “Geriatric Assessment for Oncologists” in Cancer Biology & Medicine, 12 (4). doi:10.7497/j.issn.2095-3941.2015.0082 http://v.gd/dDaLIT