

Outlook

President's Message – Spring 2008

Springtime is my favorite season, as it represents a sense of opportunity and growth. I find it very appropriate that we celebrate BCAN's anniversary at this time of year. As we enter our fourth year, BCAN's community continues to grow, our educational offerings improve and increase, and we look forward to new opportunities to advance the interests and needs of the bladder cancer community.

The demand for educational programs for the bladder cancer community is clearly evident from the responses we get to each of our offerings. More than 500 people participated in the February 20 telephone workshop BCAN co-hosted with CancerCare. Dr. Gary Steinberg, Dr. Robert Dreicer and Dr. Matthew Milowsky provided an overview of bladder cancer and new treatment options, and answered questions from the participants. For those who were unable to join the workshop, a recording of the program is available for download by [clicking here](#).

BCAN received a warm welcome from the bladder cancer community in Dallas when we hosted the BCAN Patient Forum "Understanding Bladder Cancer" on March 29 on the campus of UT Southwestern. More than 100 people joined us for this program, which included an interactive lunch discussion among bladder cancer survivors and their family members. We are very grateful to Dr. Arthur Sagalowsky of UT Southwestern Medical Center for coordinating and leading an outstanding panel of bladder cancer experts which included Drs. Yair Lotan, Ganesh Raj and Yull Arriaga, UT Southwestern Medical Center, and Dr. Seth Lerner of Baylor College of Medicine. Our next Patient Forum will be in Boston on Saturday, October 18. More details on this program will be available in the coming months.

BCAN will be on the road again this Spring, as we will be hosting the annual gathering of our Scientific Advisory Board during the 2008 American Urological Association Annual Meeting in Orlando on May 18. In addition, BCAN will once again be co-sponsoring a satellite symposium with Medical Education Collaborative and Dane Garvin Ltd. "Bladder Cancer: Diagnosis, Markers and Treatment," targeted at the urological medical community. The program is made possible by an educational grant from Abbott Molecular, and will be held on May 16, 2008 from 1:00p.m.-3:00 p.m. at the Peabody Orlando. From May 31-June 2, BCAN will be participating in the Patient Advocacy Booth at the 2008 Annual Meeting of the American Society for Clinical Oncology in Chicago.

To celebrate our third anniversary, BCAN is hosting an exciting event on May 14 at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. –"Inside Politics 2008," a political roundtable with some of the most knowledgeable observers of presidential politics. Bob Schieffer, CBS News, David Brooks,

NY Times, David Gregory, NBC News, and Gwen Ifill will share their insights and opinions, and answer questions from the audience. We hope that those of you in the Washington area will join us. And if you live outside the Washington area, May is a wonderful time to visit our nation's Capital! For more details, please [click here](#).

I must close on a very sad note. The bladder cancer community lost an extraordinarily skilled surgeon and talented researcher with the sudden death of Dr. John Stein on April 11. Dr. Stein, Professor of Urology at the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California and USC/Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, was a charter member of BCAN's Scientific Advisory Board. He was highly regarded by his medical peers, and much loved by his patients for his compassion and his skills. Dr. Stein's death reminds us of how precious life is and the importance of making the most of every day that we have.

I wish you and yours a Springtime filled with hope, wellness and love.
Diane Zipursky Quale
BCAN President

On Trial

We thank Dr. Seth Lerner and Dr. Guru Sonpavde, Baylor College of Medicine, for providing this description of **“Phase II Pilot Study with Correlative Markers of Tamoxifen for Progressive Transitional Cell Carcinoma Following Previous Chemotherapy.”**

Current systemic chemotherapy for advanced transitional cell cancer of the urinary tract is generally not curative and effective options are not available following prior chemotherapy. The Baylor College of Medicine is conducting a phase II clinical trial testing oral tamoxifen 20 mg daily in patients with progressive metastatic transitional cell cancer following 1-2 prior chemotherapy regimens. Response will be correlated with expression of estrogen receptor (ER)-beta in tumor tissue. Laboratory research conducted at the Baylor College of Medicine has demonstrated the over-expression of estrogen receptor (ER)-beta protein in human bladder cancer cells, which is a target of tamoxifen. Tamoxifen has exhibited anti-tumor activity against these cells and is also active against human bladder cancer borne by animals. The trial is expected to enroll 28 patients at the Baylor College of Medicine (Dr Guru Sonpavde and Seth Lerner), Houston, Texas, USA and the San Camillo Forlanini Hospital (Dr Cora Sternberg), Rome, Italy. For more information about this trial, please contact one of the following investigators: Seth Lerner, MD at slerner@bcm.tmc.edu or 713-798-6841; Sonpavde, MD at gurus@bcm.tmc.edu or 281-316-4927; Cora Sternberg, MD at cstern@mclink.it or 39-06-664-18008.

Ask the Doctor

Our questions for this issue of Outlook were answered by Dr. Badrinath Konety, Associate Professor, Departments of Urology, Epidemiology and Biostatistics, University of California, San Francisco. We sincerely appreciate his sharing his opinions and impressions with us.

Q. Have there been any new developments regarding the nuclear protein BLCA-1 or BLCA-4 as markers for bladder cancer? Are there any other new markers on the horizon to help detect low grade bladder cancer?

A. Currently work is ongoing to validate BLCA-1 and BLCA-4 as diagnostic markers for bladder cancer. Sample collections have been completed from large groups of patients with either suspicion of or prior history of bladder cancer and these samples are being analyzed to

determine the accuracy of these markers. Work is ongoing to develop more easy to use formats to perform the tests for these proteins.

There are other markers as yet not available in the United States, such as the Urinary Bladder Cancer (UBC) test and the CYFRA 21-1 test which detect specific proteins in the urine of bladder cancer patients. These tests are commercially available in Europe and have been used to monitor the results of chemotherapy in those with advanced bladder and lung cancer with reasonable effectiveness. Other tests that are promising and in development are tests to detect the proteins survivin and hyaluronic acid/hyaluronidase and telomerase.

Q. We understand that you are involved in research on age-specific therapies for those diagnosed with non-invasive bladder cancer. Can you share with us any findings to date in this area?

A. We have examined the association between age and results of treatment for non muscle invasive bladder cancer and found that older patients, particularly those more than 70 years of age do not tend to respond as well to intravesical BCG therapy as younger individuals. This may have to do with the fact that the immune system grows weaker with age. Since the action of BCG is dependent upon generating a strong immune response, a limited immune response as often seen in older individuals, may not be sufficient to control the growth or recurrence of tumors treated with BCG in these individuals. Other strategies to boost the immune response or use of intravesical chemotherapy following failure of BCG may be necessary.

Volunteer Corner

When BCAN's National Volunteer Board was reorganized last fall, a new set of initiatives was defined; one being to further our mission of building awareness of BCAN within the medical community. As a starting point, the Volunteer Leadership Team, as the group is now called, decided to specifically target larger urology practices in the most populated states. Since it is impossible to reach the more than 9,000 urologists in the United States, we decided to focus our efforts on those practices serving the greatest number of patients. Our goals are to make these practices aware of BCAN's patient focus and commitment to finding a cure and have our brochures made available to their patients. We are also requesting that BCAN be listed as a resource on their websites.

In the first two months of this medical outreach initiative, BCAN has sent brochures out to more than 80 practices. And we're just getting started! A huge debt of gratitude is owed to Larry Baron, Jerry Puffer, Paul Reeves, Kathie Suter and their team members who have worked tirelessly to make this happen. We know we are making a difference. If you would like to lend a hand and join one of the medical outreach teams, please contact Allison Smith, our Volunteer Coordinator. Her email address is allisonsmith@bcan.org.

It's Complementary

Want to know exactly how much stress you have in your life right now? [The Health Encyclopedia at AOL](#) offers an interactive tool to help you.

So what are the best ways to deal with the stresses you have? In past columns we have talked about some of the complementary medicine methods people use like meditation, yoga and tai chi. For more information about these and other methods to help you better handle stress visit Healthguide.org. Helpguide.org was created in 1999 by the Rotary Club of Santa Monica with active participation by Rotarians Robert and Jeanne Segal following the tragic suicide of their

daughter. Since then, a dedicated team of talented people have collaborated to create this free resource to help people in need.

Elizabeth Scott, who has counseled people on stress management techniques for more than 13 years, offers other creative stress relievers in her *Guide to Stress Management*. Here are some of her ideas:

- Play With Pets. For those who love animals, take 5 or 10- minutes to caress a cat or love your dog. Even spending time with other pets, like fish or hamsters, provide soothing benefits.
- Exercise. Take a new exercise class. The fun of learning something new can take your mind off your stressors and the class atmosphere can foster a positive type of peer pressure to keep you wanting to show up.
- Bake. Many people find stress relief when baking, which provides comforting aromas and soothing, repetitive motions to give you another focus.
- Laugh. Look for situations that will make you laugh.
- Daydream. Visualizations are great to help you manage stress, so enjoy daydreaming. Vividly imagine your best memories, visualize your success or take yourself on a peaceful walk on a secluded beach. Giving yourself a mental break in this way is a quick and fun way to step back from your stressor.

Discovered a great stress reliever that works for you? Let us know and we'll be happy to share it with other Outlook readers. Send your tips to info@bcan.org.

Upcoming Events

Join BCAN in Washington, DC on May 14 for "Inside Politics 2008", a political roundtable with Bob Schieffer, CBS News, David Brooks, New York Times, David Gregory, NBC News and Gwen Ifill, PBS. [Read More.](#)