New Videos to Walk You Through Your Journey at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre

GETTING A DIAGNOSIS OF ACUTE LEUKEMIA AND OTHER RELATED BLOOD DISORDERS CAN BE A STRESSFUL EVENT FOR PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES. Not knowing what to expect from your health care team about the diagnostic process and treatment details can add to the overwhelming fear and anxiety. Additionally, navigating through the health care system may be challenging, particularly for those who may have never been hospitalized previously.

The Princess Margaret leukemia program recently partnered with our patient education and media/technology departments to create a three part video series designed to teach patients about leukemia care at our institution. Sean, a former patient, walks us through his journey from initial diagnosis to completion of treatment to help others understand what to expect in the leukemia clinics, inpatient hospitalization, and outpatient care.

- In the first video, the focus is on the experience of getting a leukemia diagnosis and what to expect at the first visit to Princess Margaret.
- The second video reviews details about the inpatient experience of leukemia treatment, and includes interviews with nurses, pharmacists, and social workers.
- And finally, the third video introduces patients to the Blue Pod, which is the area in Princess Margaret where outpatient leukemia care is given.

The videos can be viewed on the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre YouTube channel http://bit.ly/1N58nny or scanning the code with your phone's QR code scanner. (by Shannon Nixon)
Trainees and fellows from around the world come to the Leukemia Program at Princess Margaret to advance their medical expertise for a year or two. We currently have 7 outstanding fellows from Australia, Ireland, India, the Middle East and Canada who will disseminate the knowledge they acquire during their fellowship training here to their respective countries and expand the reach of the Program by educating the next generation of leukemia clinicians around the world.

**DR. CAROLINE McNAMARA** was awarded her medical degree with Honours in 2005 from James Cook University in Australia. She completed dual hematology training (clinical and pathology) at The Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital and The Townsville Hospital, Australia. Dr. McNamara was admitted to the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (FRACP) and Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (FRCPA) in 2015. She has a particular interest in clinical and translational research especially in the field of myeloproliferative neoplasms.

**DR. TRACY MURPHY** graduated with an honours degree in medicine from University College Cork in Ireland in 2004 and obtained her membership of the Royal College of Physicians in 2009. She moved to Cambridge University Hospital for further hematology training and was based in Addenbrookes hospital for 3 years and in associated district general hospitals. She spent a year in Sydney, Australia with a focus on pathology training. She obtained her FRCPath in 2014 and completed her training in 2015. In addition to her medical degree she completed a molecular physiology degree focused on the P2X2 receptor. At Princess Margaret her interest is focused on the management of leukemia in patients unfit for intensive chemotherapy and early phase clinical trials.

**DR. ARJUN DATT LAW** completed his MBBS training from the University of Rajasthan, India and went on to train in Internal Medicine at the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh, India from 2007-2010. After working in the Department of Internal Medicine as Senior Resident, he joined the Clinical Hematology and Stem Cell Transplantation DM course at the same institute from 2012-2014. His current research interests include the biology and management of acute promyelocytic leukemia and the role of minimal residual disease detection in myeloid malignancies.

**DR. SOLAF KANFAR** was awarded her medical degree with second degree honors from King Faisal University in Dammam Saudi Arabia in 2007, and was then accepted as a faculty member in the same university. She completed her internal medicine residency program under the Saudi commission for health specialties in 2012 and her Fellowship in Adult Hematology and stem cell transplant also under the Saudi commission in King Fahad Specialist Hospital Dammam in Feb 2015. Currently, as a Leukemia fellow since July 2015, she is advancing her interest in acute leukemia management specifically in adolescence and young adults.

**DR. HAFIS MALHAN** received his medical degree from King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in 2006. He then completed residency in Internal Medicine in 2010, and fellowship training in Adult Hematology in 2013 at King Faisal Specialist Hospital & Research Center in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He was part of a team to establish an oncology center in the region south of the KSA, and worked as internal medicine and hematology consultant since February 2014. His interest is on AML and JAK2 positive myeloproliferative neoplasms (MPN)

**DR. ZEYAD AL-SHAIBANI** is a certified specialist in Internal Medicine (2011) by the Jordan Medical Council. He is also certified in both Internal Medicine (2009) and Adult Hematology (2013) by the Saudi Commission for Health Specialties General Secretariat. Most recently he completed an Adult Hematology and Bone Marrow Transplantation degree from the University of Toronto. He is currently working as a clinical fellow in the Leukemia and Lymphoma Programs.

**DR. JENNY HO** obtained her medical degree (2005) and training in Hematology (2011) from the University of Ottawa (Canada). She has a research interest in basic science and completed a graduate degree (MSc) in cancer biology (University of Toronto) prior to her medical studies. After her medical training, she returned to research as a post-doctoral fellow at the University Health Network (Toronto) where she studied leukemia stem cells. In January 2016 she will combine her interest in research and myeloproliferative neoplasms (MPN) through a translational research fellowship in MPN.
Two noteworthy clinical and translational research findings were presented recently as oral presentations at the 57th Annual Meeting and Exposition of the American Society of Hematology.

Samantha Hershenfeld, a U of T medical student, worked with nurse practitioner Mary Doherty to analyze the encouraging clinical data gathered through the Shared Care model of AML treatment at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre. The Shared Care model, which is a component of our leukemia Outreach Program, enables patients to receive their consolidation chemotherapy for AML at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, but receive post-consolidation supportive care such as blood tests, transfusions, and treatment for febrile neutropenia at their local hospitals to help alleviate patients’ travel burdens.

By receiving post-consolidation care locally, patients were able to save travel time, and yet patients in the shared care model had no significant difference in overall survival than those who received all of their care at Princess Margaret. The hazard of death between the two groups was no different even when taking into consideration several factors such as age, gender, cytogenetics prognosis, and whether they have AML or APL. These results are encouraging when thinking of expanding this model at centers across the country.

To watch Samantha eloquently elaborates their results in an interview with the American Society of Hematology, type the link http://bit.ly/1MgukLI or scan the QR code.

Dr. Liran Shlush, a clinician scientist, is trying to understand the origins of AML relapse in order to offer better treatment to patients by targeting the specific cells that survive chemotherapy. What his team did was to look for variant cells present at relapse and tracked their origins by looking back for specific cell populations present at diagnosis. They found evidence for the first time that AML can relapse from distinct, predictable, and existing origins, suggesting that chemotherapy worked to eliminate the leukemia cells, but the precursors of cells that cause relapse did not. Although this points out to the complexity of the origins of relapse, their findings pose a series of predictions as to the success of different treatment options based on the remaining variant cells. They conclude that it is possible to design more effective and personalized treatment strategies for preventing AML relapse.

Research Highlights

Dr. Liran Shlush (left) with Dr. John Dick (right) discussing the results of their recent discovery on the origins of relapse in AML.
DR. STEVEN CHAN has been named a Gilead Sciences Research Scholar in Hematology/Oncology. This prestigious award is highly competitive, with only two junior faculty researchers awarded each year in an international competition to support innovative scientific research that will advance knowledge in the field of hematology/oncology and to provide support for research career development.

Join thousands of cyclists of all abilities on June 11 & 12, 2016 in the Enbridge Ride to Conquer Cancer benefiting Princess Margaret Cancer Centre. This epic two day 200+KM cycling journey will take you throughout Ontario’s countryside between Toronto and Niagara Falls and has multiple routes to choose from.

The Ride is fully supported before, during and after the event. This is truly an experience you will never forget and one that will see you raising funds for Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, one of the top 5 research centres in the world. So why not grab a friend and join Canada’s largest cycling fundraiser!

For more information or to register, please visit our website at conquercancer.ca or call 877-699-BIKE (2453)

The Princess Margaret Cancer Foundation raises and stewards funds to support the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, one of the top 5 cancer research centres in the world. The Princess Margaret is a comprehensive cancer centre that offers full suite of services at the community, regional, provincial and international levels, and is a key resource for complex cancer care spanning the continuum from diagnosis to palliation and survivorship across disease sites. Philanthropy is critical to making this possible.

For more information on how you can help support our leukemia program at the Princess Margaret, please contact:

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