

Newsletter

Volume 22 – October 2019

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ST GEORGE'S
CANCER INSTITUTE
(Registered Charitable Trust)

Greetings

Three quarters of the way through the year and apologies for the slowness of our newsletter. Could say we are saving trees!

The Institute is continuing to support patients who find it difficult to afford the full amount of their specialised treatment that is often only available at St George's Cancer Care.

Art displays continue to hang on the walls leading to the radiation treatment suite. These are for sale with generous amounts going to the Institute from the artists. If you are in the area feel free to have a look.

We have visited Westport and Wanaka with Chris Atkinson, Chris Wynne from Cancer Care, Frank Kueppers from Urology Associates and Oliver Comyn, St George's Eye Care presenting on their specialist areas. We have also hosted several groups for information evenings at the Centre.

Here is to spring and good health.

Cilla Glasson
Chair, Cancer Institute Trustees Ltd
and Fundraising Committee

The future of cancer treatment, a Blue Skies meeting

Cancer treatment has changed considerably since the opening of St George's Cancer Care in 2010. New treatments include less invasive surgery, the use of immunotherapy and high precision stereotactic radiosurgery that were not available in Christchurch a decade ago, however are now commonly used at St George's. The rate of change in medicine continues to accelerate and recognising this the oncology specialists and Board members have met to identify possible future developments in cancer.

The 'Blue Skies' meeting involved presentations from Dr Ross Keenan from Pacific Radiology Group who described the integration of MR scanning and radiation treatment to allow even greater precision of radiotherapy beam delivery including the possibility of automated position correction during each daily treatment. Kathryn Neilson, radiation therapist, identified new software that will allow automated treatment delivery and immediate feedback of beam accuracy. Dr Jim Edwards, medical oncologist, spoke of the new targeted chemotherapy and immune therapy drugs, most of which are not funded in New Zealand.

St George's Cancer Care needs to continue to deliver cutting edge advanced cancer treatment and this can only be done by imagining how we will be administering cancer treatment in the future. Already some of the ideas are being actioned and another Blue Skies meeting is planned.

Breast cancer and hot flushes research

You may have seen a front-page article in the Christchurch Press recently about a clinical trial for women with breast cancer who experience hot flushes. An international study of a new medicine designed to decrease the intensity and severity of hot flushes is currently being undertaken.

Eighty percent of women who are taking hormone therapy after an operation for breast cancer have hot flushes. For many, these flushes are debilitating both physically and socially and up to 25% stop taking their hormone therapy because of hot flushes.

Patients who have more than 50 moderate or severe hot flushes each week will take the trial medicine or placebo for a month recording the number and intensity of flushes. Over 100 women in USA, Australia and NZ will participate hopefully leading to a new medicine for this, often debilitating side effect of hormone treatment.

Chris Wynne
Radiation Oncologist, St George's Cancer Care
Director, St George's Cancer Institute Trustees Ltd

Mindfulness and exercise research update

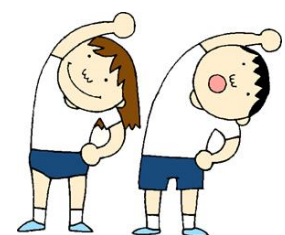
The much-anticipated Mindfulness and Exercise research project is underway. The first 6-week exercise and mindfulness groups have started. We plan to run our next 6-week mindfulness and exercise groups starting in late October 2019.

Mindfulness and exercise have been shown to have a positive impact on people with cancer's health and wellbeing. Our study aims to compare mindfulness with exercise in people who are having or have completed their treatment. Traditionally mindfulness and exercise studies have involved 2.5 hours per week of structured classes with expectations of significant amounts of daily home practice (eg 45 minutes of formal mindfulness practice daily).

Our study is testing whether people during and after cancer treatment wish to, and can, attend a 6 weekly one-hour group programme with daily homework of only 10 or 15 minutes of formal practice. We are investigating whether a smaller 'dose' of exercise and/or mindfulness is feasible, acceptable and as effective in this population.

Currently we have 14 people in the exercise and mindfulness groups and 7 people who were randomised to the waitlist who will then be randomised to either exercise or mindfulness in the next groups being run.

We are incredibly grateful for the support of the staff and their help with recruitment and to our patients for their generosity in giving their time and support to this study.



Kathryn Taylor and Ginny Eggleston
Clinical Psychologists, St George's Cancer Care

Treatment Support Grants

The Trust started providing financial assistance to qualifying patients in July 2011 and up to August 2019 has assisted 257 patients with financial support totalling \$832,429.

Dedicated Physiotherapy treatment support grants: The Institute continues to be grateful for the generous donations received from a patient who was so impressed with the care she received from the Lymphoedema Physiotherapy team, that she wanted other patients, who could not afford this service, to receive the benefit of the specialised treatment. The Institute also received a donation from another donor, specifically tagged for this treatment.

Since the physiotherapy grant commenced in May 2014, support has been provided to 162 patients to the value of \$46,844 up to June 2019.

