

Mosaic

cancer support group's
newsletter

October 2009



Cancer Voices SA advocacy training



From Kathriye's Desk

Hello everyone.

Welcome to the final Mosaic for 2009. Please find enclosed your 2010 Support Group Update form. Please return the form by 30 October 2009 so that we can update information about your group on the website and **Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20**.

There is still time for your members to participate in a Staying Healthy After Cancer program for 2009. The last program at Port Adelaide commences on Wednesday 7 October. Anyone interested can contact me to book in. As it is short notice some people may miss the first session but can join the group in the second session. The evening program at Eastwood commences Wednesday 14 October. Please advise

your members of these two programs, especially new members who may be looking for information about how to manage the ongoing impact of cancer and its treatments. The Staying Healthy After Cancer program is an education program and as such, offers something different to a support group.

Although it is still a few months away, this is my chance to wish you and your members and families a wonderful festive season, with plenty of the things that make you happy. As always congratulations on all your hard work and dedication to maintain your support groups. The peer support that you facilitate by providing a safe environment to exchange ideas and support is a wonderful service for the community.

Kathriye Strassnick
t 08 8291 4158
e kstrassnick@cancersa.org.au

Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20

Cancer Council Helpline is a free, non-medical, information and support service for all South Australians. It is a confidential service staffed by people with expertise and experience in cancer care or counselling. The service operates Monday–Friday, 8:30 am to 8:00 pm via phone and email. People can also drop in and talk face to face between 9:00 am – 5:00 pm.

From the CE

One of the most vital activities that Cancer Council SA undertakes is advocacy. We have recently given advocacy a greater focus, with dedicated resources and a new strategic plan. As an advocate, Cancer Council SA works to improve the health of our community by lobbying and influencing decision makers, legislators and policy makers about cancer control in South Australia.

As well as our support for the national Get Behind Bowel Screenings campaign we have several campaigns and initiatives over the next 12 months.

Under our tobacco control strategy, we will:

- lobby the government for an increase in funding for Quitline campaigns, especially in light of the recent 'separation' television commercial that resulted in a 68 per cent increase in calls to the Quitline
- work with government towards a ban on tobacco advertising displays at point-of-sale in the retail environment by 2010. Some retailers have chosen to do this voluntarily but there is still a long way to go
- target our state government to lobby the federal government for an increase in tobacco tax by 50 per cent.



With our SunSmart strategy, we will;

- advocate for SunSmart policies to be adopted by all schools, early childhood centres and workplaces and local government
- lobby the state government to monitor and reinforce the recently adopted legislation regarding solarium use.

Whilst Cancer Council SA supports many national campaigns, our goal is to become more active locally and encourage community involvement. Your support will be vital to create a community voice, through activities such as writing letters, visiting websites, even making personal visits to politicians. If you are interested in becoming more active in the community as a cancer advocate, please contact Anna Minges, Advocacy and Policy Adviser on 08 8291 4361.

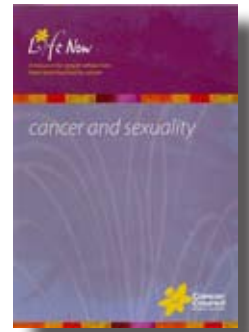
Professor Brenda Wilson
Chief Executive



What's new

Cancer and sexuality— new CD

We have recently received a copy of a CD set from Cancer Council Western Australia called 'Cancer and Sexuality'.



It was produced in response to an immense demand from people with cancer about information on sex and sexuality. A cancer diagnosis and subsequent treatment has an impact on all aspects of life but sexuality is the issue that is not often addressed. Please keep this resource in mind when speaking to members as it may be very helpful to them.

The CD includes individual stories and topics such as:

- what's happening to me?
- changes in appearance
- emotional changes
- what sex is and isn't
- you and your partner
- starting new relationships
- common sexual problems
- contraception
- how to talk to health professionals.

The CD is available on Cancer Council WA website. www.cancerwa.asn.au then go to the Patients, families and friends tab, and Life Now.

Take action against cancer

Become a voice for better cancer treatment and services.

Cancer Council SA and Cancer Voices SA are convening a two-day advocacy training workshop.

**When: Friday 6 November and
Saturday 7 November 2009**

This workshop will assist people interested in cancer and public health policy become effective advocates for improved health policies and systems.

The aims of the workshop are to:

- provide the skills and knowledge required for participants to become active and effective advocates for improvements to cancer policies and systems

- provide the skills and knowledge to effectively represent the interest of cancer consumers in a range of forums
- empower cancer consumers to fully participate at all levels where cancer decisions are made
- enhance participants' understanding of how to influence government, the health delivery system, clinicians, research institutions, cancer organisations and support providers.

To register your interest or find out more information contact:

Dr Vikki Knott
Senior Project Officer
vknott@cancersa.org.au
t 08 8291 4277
f 08 8291 4268



Research update

New hope from natural therapies

Intestinal mucositis is a serious and potentially life-threatening consequence of chemotherapy administered for the treatment of a wide range of cancers. It is usually characterised by nausea, bloating, cramping and diarrhoea.

Mucositis is generally experienced by 40–60 per cent of cancer patients and almost 100 per cent of patients undergoing more aggressive chemotherapy treatment.

Associate Professor Howarth says that at present, there is no satisfactory treatment for mucositis. “The condition limits the amount of chemotherapy a cancer patient can withstand. Eliminating mucositis would mean that patients could be given higher doses of chemotherapy, resulting in better treatment outcomes,” he said.

Research undertaken by Associate Professor Howarth and his team has revealed that natural therapies such as lyprinol (an extract from a New Zealand shellfish), emu oil and grape seed extract have great promise in relieving the symptoms of mucositis. The discoveries have also generated international interest.

“Slowly but surely we are applying more rigorous scientific scrutiny to alternative and complementary therapies. It is an exciting time as we have shown that these treatments, many of which have been handed down over thousands of years, are indeed very useful,” said Associate Professor Howarth.

In December 2008, Associate Professor Howarth won the prestigious Sally Birch Fellowship in Cancer Control for his work in reducing the side effects of chemotherapy. He faced a competitive national field to win the three-year Cancer Council Australia Fellowship worth \$100,000 each year, commencing in 2009.

“This significant funding from Cancer Council Australia will help facilitate the development of new treatment strategies for mucositis, including the exciting clinical potential for specific ‘probiotics’ (health-promoting bacteria) to protect the intestine from injury,” he said.

Researchers: A/Professor Gordon Howarth, A/Professor Ross Butler, Dr Adrian Cummins; Children, Youth and Women’s Health Service

Relay For Life — March 2010

Calling all survivors and carers

We at Cancer Council SA want to pay tribute to those who have battled cancer—people like you. We’d like to invite you, your family and friends to join us for Relay For Life, an exciting event coming to Adelaide in March 2010.

Relay For Life is a 19-hour team event to honour cancer survivors, remember those who’ve passed on, raise awareness about cancer and raise money for the fight against cancer. Teams of 10–15 people take turns walking and running around a local track for 19 hours. It’s a festive atmosphere filled with music, food, and entertainment. But the event has a serious side, too.

The survivors and carers lap kicks-off on Saturday at 2:00 pm with a special tribute to cancer survivors. Anyone who has dealt with the emotion that comes with a diagnosis is considered a survivor, including family members who walk as carers. Survivors walk one lap of the track as the rest of the participants cheer. Then all participants get on the track and begin the Relay For Life.

I look forward to seeing you at the 2010 event, which is being held on: Saturday 27 March and Sunday 28 March 2010.

If you have any questions please don’t hesitate to contact me on 0413 095 022.

Jane Wilkinson, Survivor Coordinator

*Celebrate Remember
Fight Back!*



Are you looking for a guest speaker for 2010?

COTA Seniors Voice can arrange a speaker to attend your group.

Did you know that people with a chronic physical illness are at greater risk of developing depression? With modern treatments and improvements in pain management, cancer may now be considered a 'chronic illness'. Depression is a common illness—it is estimated that 1 in 6 women and 1 in 8 men will experience depression in their lifetime. However having a chronic illness can put you at greater risk—the symptoms, as well as some treatments, can result in major lifestyle changes which can interfere with a person's work, social life and attitude to life. You may find that it is too much trouble to keep some of your social engagements and this could result in isolation, leading you to believe that the illness is 'taking over your life'.

A diagnosis of cancer may lead to experiences of grief and loss—life may never be the same again. You may need to learn to live with your illness but you don't need to live with depression. Depression is an illness and treatments are effective. It is best to seek help early rather than wait and try to 'tough it out'. Even though you may have survived cancer, life won't necessarily all fall back into place. Depression is not a sign of weakness and people shouldn't feel ashamed to seek help.

COTA Seniors Voice has peer educators that can come to your support group to talk about depression in older people. They describe the symptoms, the many causes of depression and the types of help available. Furthermore they can give you useful tips

to help prevent depression. The key message is that depression is not a normal part of ageing. COTA hopes to raise the awareness and understanding of depression whilst empowering older people to take action for their health.

You may like to book a session for a peer educator to come and talk about *beyond maturity blues*. *Beyondblue* has useful resources that peer educators can bring to your support group. We can also provide speakers to talk at carers' support groups as research has shown that carers are also more vulnerable to depression.

The sessions are interactive and not depressing!

For more information about depression and older people book a free peer education session for your group. Contact COTA Seniors Voice on 08 8232 0422 for more information. Peer educators will travel anywhere across South Australia. Country Callers please phone 1800 182 324.



Diary dates

October

7 October to 18 November

14 October to 25 November

26 October

1 November

Girls Night In

Staying Healthy After Cancer, Port Adelaide, 10:00 am to 12:30 pm

Staying Healthy After Cancer, Cancer Council SA, 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm

Pink Ribbon Day

Race 4 Life



202 Greenhill Road
Eastwood SA 5063

t 08 8291 4111
f 08 8291 4122

cc@cancersa.org.au

www.cancersa.org.au

**Cancer Council
Helpline**
13 11 20