

BOPA Bursary Scheme

ASCO Daily Blog: Day 2

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Saturday, day 2 of the ASCO18 Meeting and a much busier and intense day for the group compared to day 1. There were educational poster and oral abstract sessions taking place all day from 8am-6pm on various different clinical areas. The key tumour sites covered were breast cancer, paediatrics, haematology and immunotherapy. Lots of tweeting and video blogging by the team, providing updates on potential areas of interest for all our colleagues back in the UK.

There was fantastic team working and networking with presenting abstract authors in order to help provide educational messages. Well done Team! Many of the sessions were in the theme of ASCO18 – “expanding the reach of precision medicine”. I will just touch on some of the highlights that we managed to capture in our BOPA bursary group.

Calum, Hannah and Marcus attended the oral presentation on immunotherapy. Immunotherapy is an area where pathways are continuing to develop. Lots of new targets being tested. For example, ICOS in the #3000 ICONIC study. Currently such studies raise questions around the optimal combination to achieve best outcomes.

Also key question in mutational analysis from Calum is “Are our pathology services geared up to support this?”

“Genomic characterisation of tumours” Should we be treating patients based on their individual mutations and not on tumour type.

The Zuma-1 phase II trial in patients with refractory lymphoma #abstract 3003. This was CAR-T study reported by Marcus and the longer follow-up from the original Axi-Cel licensing study demonstrated that 41% patients with an initial PR converted to CR at a later date and best response may occur up to a year after CAR-T treatment.

Joe attended the paediatric oral presentation and reported on #1050 abstract. This was on the use of dexrazoxane which is added to AML therapy in paediatrics. This was interesting and raises the question of whether we should be adding dexrazoxane to front line anthracycline therapy in line with US practice. The study showed a small reduction in EF and may improve OS – this will need reviewing by commissioning for UK practice.

Poster abstract #6591 found by Kumud, detailed a pharmacy led quality improvement (QI) project. It was great to see a pharmacy led intervention selected for ASCO18. This is inspiring to myself and other pharmacists in the UK. Perhaps BOPA members conducting good research should consider ASCO to present their work. The bursary group are looking forward to supporting our team mate Alkis tomorrow for his poster presentation.

Steve attended a session on access to cancer medicines in low income countries and tweeted how it was worth pausing to reflect how fortunate we are in the UK to have excellent access to new cancer medicines. Steve highlighted the challenges in Kenya who grew their service to expand from 200 to

8000 pts treated in 10 years. But writing chemo regimen protocols and educating staff on safe use of chemotherapy remain key challenges for them. Is this an opportunity for BOPA to help by sharing our educational resources?

The session then focused on drug shortages which affect all countries with telling data showing that US pharmacists dealing with paediatric oncology spend 15 to 20% of their day dealing with shortages!

My highlight of the day however was on a poster of the use of Sunitinib in the use of GIST which was presented in a video blog by Hannah and Charlie. This has had a phenomenal response on Twitter. This looked at the impact of proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) on Sunitinib and found PPI use reduced Sunitinib absorption which suggests a possible dose increase may be needed. Although this study had only a small number of patients this is of particular interest to us pharmacists as drug interactions are a key area where we can get involved to optimise a patients therapy.

These are only a few of the many updates that the bursary group have been working hard to prepare. Tomorrow, Sunday, is the 'big' day of ASCO when the main plenary sessions taking place. It's going to be busy with everyone excited to hear the results of breaking abstracts selected for key note discussions. We are looking forward to sharing these results and the potential impact these may have for practice back in the UK.

That's all from me. Kelly.