The Breast Cancer Treatment Group

2005 has been another successful and interesting year for the ACT and SE NSW Breast Cancer Treatment Group. It is encouraging to see members enthusiastic about promoting best practice for breast cancer management in our region and telling other groups about our aims and objectives.

This was particularly evident during the recent breast cancer fund raising events in Canberra.

Following on from the publication of our 5-year report on our quality assurance project in late 2004, this year has also seen presentations of our project at both regional and national scientific meetings. The group recently published its experience on the surgical management of invasive breast cancer in our region.

Summary data from our eight-year report is also detailed in this newsletter.

This year saw the group invite Dr Fran Boyle, a Medical Oncologist, and Medical Director of the Pam McLean Cancer Communications Centre at the University of Sydney speak on multidisciplinary care in breast cancer. Her talk was excellent and focused on the psychosocial aspects of patient management.

Dr John Buckingham presented a paper on the management of ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS) in our region. This paper has recently been submitted for consideration for publication. On November 21 we were fortunate to have Dr John Boyages, a Radiation Oncologist and Executive Director of the NSW Breast Cancer Institute, speak to our group on management of ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS).

Thank you to everyone who completes the data forms that enable us to monitor how we are managing breast cancer in our region.

A big thank you also to Yanping and her team. Without their dedication our group and its projects would not continue.

This will be my last report as chair of our group. Thank you to everyone for your support. It has been an honour to be Chair of this group. I look forward to remaining an active member in 2006 with a new Chair, A/Prof. Paul Dugdale, Chief Health Officer.

A/Prof Jane Dahlstrom
Chair of the ACT & SE NSW Breast Cancer Treatment Group

ACT & SE NSW Breast Cancer Project Meeting Dates for 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month &amp; Location</th>
<th>Breast Cancer Treatment Group Subcommittee Meetings</th>
<th>Breast Cancer Treatment Group Meetings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Tuesday) 6.00pm</td>
<td>Training room, Level 1, ACT Health Building, Civic</td>
<td>Drawing room, University House, ANU</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

January  7  27
February
March
April  18
May  22
June
July
August  1  28
September
October  31
November 20
December

* Please ensure any items to be discussed at these meetings is provided at least 2 weeks prior to the date of the meeting.

THANK YOU & FAREWELL

A special thank you to Bev Gow-Wilson and Jane Dahlstrom for their roles as deputy chair and chair of our group from Nov 2003-Nov 2004. They were driving forces behind the publication of the 5-year report and have provided important support to the Project team.
The Data Management Sub-committee has enjoyed a year of consolidation after the very large effort in 2004 to complete the five-year report. Much has been achieved however. The Sub-committee has had input into several studies of surgical care based on the project data.

These studies have been led by Dr John Buckingham and colleagues and have resulted in valuable presentations to scientific meetings in Australia as well as two manuscripts (one of which has already been published).

Further studies utilising the project’s data are underway including a study by members of the group examining characteristics of incident multi-focal invasive breast cancers.

As detailed elsewhere in the newsletter the project participation remains excellent. The strong support for the project from treating health professionals and from women with breast cancer remains our most important asset.

The data collection is continuing to grow. Some minor changes in the data items collected have been made to reflect new practices. In particular, the data collection form was revised in August 2005 to collect DCIS nuclear grade and c-erb- B2 (Her 2) receptor status.

Our major task this coming year will be to provide the first information about outcomes of treatment from the group. This will be possible because of continued follow-up of each participating patient over the 8 years that the project has been in existence.

Gathering, cleaning and tabulating these data will be a huge task for our group, but will add much to our understanding of breast cancer treatment in the region.

Finally I would like to sincerely thank our diligent and uncomplaining project staff, Yanping Zhang, Sally Naylor (who is currently on leave) and Andrea McDonald. The Sub-committee looks forward to another productive year in 2006.

Dr Paul Craft
Chair of the Data Management Sub-committee

Our Audit: Past, Present and Future

The Breast Cancer Treatment Group was established to promote the adoption of guidelines published in 1995 by the NH&MRC for the earlier breast cancer and to encourage multidisciplinary approach to treatment across our region.

This has been successful with our continuing three monthly meetings, attended by all who are interested in breast cancer.

It was decided early in our group’s history that we need to measure our adherence to the guidelines and so our AUDIT was developed.

Yanping Zhang was instrumental in the development of a computer model and continues to play a most important role today. Several years after we instigated our audit, the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons commenced a similar National Audit.

An important measure of the success of an audit is the evaluation and publication of results. We published the methodology of the audit in the Medical Journal of Australia in 2000 and now we have published a detailed analysis of the surgical treatment of invasive breast cancer. We could not have achieved this without the ongoing support of all members of the Breast Cancer Treatment Group.

As part of the optimal ongoing management of breast cancer we need to be certain that our management meets certain quality thresholds set by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. We have recently evaluated our management of Ductal Carcinoma in Situ from our audit database over seven years against these thresholds and submitted this for publication.

Dr John Buckingham
Surgeon
Member of Data Management Sub-committee

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Dr John Buckingham
Surgeon
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A Reminder for Surgeons – RACS Breast Section Data Requirement

Surgeons who are full members of the Royal College of Surgeons, Breast Section, are required to submit all cases of breast cancer treated to the National Breast Cancer Audit each year. This need not create extra work as our ACT & SE NSW Breast Cancer Treatment Quality Assurance database has been set up so that data required by the audit can be easily extracted in the appropriate format.

To request audit data please contact the Project Office using contact details at the back of this publication.
Elsewhere in this newsletter A/Prof Jane Dahlstrom and Dr John Buckingham have described the remarkable achievements of our audit and of our treatment group. They have pointed out particular successes and acknowledged individual contributions.

A stable, high participation audit; careful audit data management, detailed reporting of the audit data and peer reviewed publications are backed by enthusiasm and commitment from the treatment group leadership and membership. Decision making about individual cases is facilitated by a regular multi-disciplinary clinical case-review meeting.

These are all indicators of mature, robust processes and of durable organizations. With these come the sorts of opportunities that lead us beyond any resting on our laurels. We will continue to accrue, report and comment on our audit data. We will continue our interest group and its activities in promoting quality, evidence based treatment, education and multidisciplinary management linked closely with our community.

However, there are many unmet needs and many new opportunities that flow from our success, stability and maturity. Much work needs to be done in many areas:

- integration and consolidation of breast services,
- promotion of breast cancer priorities within the new ACT Health Cancer Stream and to government,
- refining of our clinical services and resource use,
- boosting of our undergraduate and postgraduate education and training,
- clinical research and participation in trials,
- development of collaborations with other breast cancer groups and institutes in Australia and abroad; all cry out for attention.

As do many other areas not listed.

Unfortunately we are losing Jane Dahlstrom’s leadership but I am sure not her commitment or participation. Jane deserves our gratitude and leaves large shoes to fill. Our field of opportunities will be a major challenge to her successor.

A/Prof Noel Tait
Surgeon
Member of Data Management
Sub-committee

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**LATEST RESULTS OF THE PROJECT:**

**July 1997 to June 2005 on the eight year data collection**

The Breast Cancer Treatment Quality Assurance Project has already lasted for 8 years. 2218 new breast cancer cases have been notified to the project, and 2142 (96.6%) patients have given their written consent and their data collection forms have been completed. We are up to the fifth round of follow-up.
Events of the Year

JOURNAL ARTICLE
Anil Koshy, John M Buckingham, Yanping Zhang, Paul Craft, Jane E. Dahlstrom, Noel Tait and members of the ACT and SE NSW Breast Cancer Treatment Group

PRESENTATIONS
Surgical Management of DCIS in the ACT & SE NSW to:
- Surgeons in Darwin, April 2005
- Royal Australasian College of Surgeons Annual Scientific Conference, Perth, May 2005

Measuring up Multi-focal Breast Cancer – a Retrospective Analysis of Tumour Size and Lymph Node Status in Multi-focal Multi-centric Breast Cancer in the ACT and South-East NSW to:
- Grand Rounds, The Canberra Hospital, November 2005

GUEST SPEAKERS
May 2005
Dr Fran Boyle, Medical Oncologist, and Medical Director of the Pam McLean Cancer Communications Centre at the University of Sydney. Topic: “Discussing prognosis in breast cancer: are we going to win”?

November 2005
Professor John Boyages, Executive Director of the NSW Breast Cancer Institute and Senior Staff Specialist in Radiation Oncology at Westmead Hospital and the Sydney Adventist Hospital in Wahroonga. Topic: “Ductal Carcinoma In-Situ (DCIS) – The Dilemmas”

COMMENDATIONS
We received the following commendations from outside the ACT and SE NSW region.

1. The Queensland Government congratulated the Group on the 5-year report ‘and all the hard work it has entailed it is a very valuable document’. They look forward to the next report.

2. Dr Christopher Dibden from the Adelaide Radiotherapy Centre thanked us for forwarding him a copy of the newsletter. ‘I am most impressed by the high quality of both format and content of the publication and congratulate you and your team on your efforts’.

Contact Details
If you have any enquiries or comments about the project, please contact the Project Coordinator.

Any clinical queries should be directed to Dr Paul Craft at the Canberra Hospital on (02) 6244 2220 or contact:

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