



Epworth Breast Service

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2013

We genuinely strive to continually improve the level of care we provide to our patients with breast problems, with the ongoing aim of providing our patients with the best breast care possible. A vital component of our role is to inform and educate our patients, supporting and empowering them to navigate the breast cancer journey. We are therefore constantly exploring, developing and implementing new initiatives, some of which are outlined below.



Jane O'Brien
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Specialist Breast and
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Epworth Breast Service

Epworth Mini-Field of Women October 2013

On Tuesday October 1st 2013, the first day of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the Epworth Hospital community will host a Mini-field of Women on the balcony of our new 4th floor Day Oncology Unit, which has spectacular views over East Melbourne. "Every day, 38 Australian women will learn they have breast cancer and seven will lose their lives to the disease. Each time a woman hears she has breast cancer, the impact extends to her family, friends and those around her in the community," Breast Cancer Network Australia's (BCNA) Mini-Field of Women events provide an opportunity for local communities to support and pay tribute to all those affected by breast cancer. Enquiries: Trish Calder 0400 657 968 / trish.calder@epworth.org.au



Breast Cancer Rehabilitation: Pilot Programme October 2013

Trish Calder, specialist breast care nurse, is the driving force behind the development and implementation of a rehabilitation programme for our breast cancer patients after they have completed their primary treatment. The aim of the programme is to assist patients in obtaining maximal physical, social, psychological and vocational functioning within the limits created by the cancer and subsequent treatment, and will have physical reconditioning and psycho-education components.

The diagnosis of breast cancer profoundly impacts the lives of women. There are often other unexpected challenges on the journey with illness, which may include family and relationship issues and integration of a change in body image and physical energy levels.



Whilst patients are undergoing active treatment for breast cancer, they report that they feel supported by the treating team, but after completion of treatment they report feeling anxious about being "abandoned". Cancer survivors and their families experience different health and supportive needs, which may not always be met. Late onset side effects and fear of recurrence are just some of the concerns for these patients.

It is also widely recognised that breast cancer patients often express an overwhelming desire to improve their overall health, and demonstrate an enhanced motivation to change lifestyle behaviours, especially within the year after diagnosis. Health care professionals are ideally placed to take advantage of this "teachable moment".

An 8 week pilot programme is commencing in October, with weekly 2 hour sessions which will involve 1 hour of individualised exercise and 1 hour of supportive care education sessions. The programme aims to provide the tools and strategies to empower cancer patients to take control of their own health. Topics covered will include the benefits of exercise, finance, managing anxiety, intimacy, relationships, self esteem and healthy eating.

New: Epworth Breast Service Stress Balls

To help lymphatic flow, squeezing a soft ball in the hand is often useful after breast cancer surgery, in which some of the lymph glands under the arm are removed. Many lymphoedema practitioners suggest a good way to do this is to use a 'stress' ball, and our pink "Epworth Breast Service" stress balls are ideal for this purpose.



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www.melbournebreastcancersurgery.com.au



Epworth Breast Service

Specialist Breast and Oncoplastic Surgeons Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Breast Cancer Management

The Angelina Effect- GP Educational Forum July 2013

In what has been dubbed by Time magazine as the "Angelina Effect", actress Angelina Jolie's recent public announcement about her decision to undergo a preventive double mastectomy because of a faulty gene has attracted worldwide interest, focusing the spotlight on genetic testing and prophylactic mastectomy, and on a local level has certainly provoked many questions on both risk assessment and risk management.

In an attempt to address some of the questions that I as a specialist breast surgeon have repeatedly been asked following Angelina's recent announcement, such as "could I have the breast cancer gene", "should I be having genetic testing", and even "can I have an Angelina?" the Epworth Breast Service recently held an educational forum for general practitioners, with a specialist panel including myself and my breast surgical colleagues, Melanie Walker and Chantel Thornton, plastic surgeon, Hamish Farrow, gynaecological oncologist, Tom Jobling and Gillian Mitchell, director of the Familial Cancer Centre at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre.



The forum was attended by over 80 general practitioners. Feedback was positive, and a public forum is planned for December 2013. A videorecording of the forum can be viewed on www.melbournebreastcancersurgery.com.au

Breast Cancer Personal Patient Information USB Bracelets

To improve convenience and ease of access to information resources, we have recently introduced personal patient information 2GB USB memory stick silicone bracelets, allowing us to load electronic versions of the appropriate patient resources including DVDs on breast reconstruction etc, in a tailored fashion for each individual patient depending on specific information needs. Providing high levels of information to patients and involving them in their own treatment decisions has been shown to have a protective effect on patients' well-being.



The USB wristbands allow us to address and customise the constantly changing information needs of each individual woman as she proceeds along the breast cancer trajectory, providing appropriate, individualised material in a staged, tailored fashion. We are also able as appropriate, to load patients' imaging and pathology reports onto their personal USB bracelets. Each chemotherapy chair in the new day oncology unit has a personal computer/TV monitor, and breast cancer patients can plug in their USB bracelets to view information during treatment sessions, as pictured below right.



The personal USB memory stick silicone wristbands are proving extremely popular with the breast cancer patients and feedback has been very positive. A patient can now carry all her breast cancer information around simply by popping on her pink bracelet!

Epworth Breast Service Breast Surgeons

Fewer than 8% of Australian surgeons are female, and the Epworth Breast Service is therefore very fortunate and proud to be able to offer our breast patients the expertise of two highly trained and extremely experienced female specialist breast and oncoplastic surgeons, both of whom have extensive international training and experience.



Miss Jane O'Brien
MBBS 1985
University of Melbourne
FRACS 1995



Miss Melanie Walker
MBBS 1994
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