



Epworth Breast Service

Newsletter Christmas 2014

2014 has been a busy and productive year for the Epworth Breast Service. We have treated more new breast cancers to date in 2014, than in any previous year since the establishment of the Epworth Breast Service in 2005, and have restructured our long term breast cancer follow up programme to include a new team member, Dr Bridie O'Donnell. This will allow us to focus strongly on reinforcing the importance of lifestyle factors to our breast cancer patients who are undergoing routine surveillance, and will also increase the capacity of our breast surgeons, Jane O'Brien and Melanie Walker, to see new breast referrals in a swift and timely fashion. The Epworth Breast Cancer Rehabilitation Programme, first piloted in 2013, continues to expand and develop further.

We genuinely strive to continually improve the level of care we provide to our patients with breast problems, with the ongoing goal of providing our patients with the best breast care possible. We aim to support and empower our patients to navigate the breast cancer journey and we see as a vital component of our role, to educate and inform ourselves, and update our patients and their general practitioners on an ongoing basis.

We wish you a happy and healthy festive season.



Record High 73% Rate of Immediate Breast Reconstruction in 2014

Approximately 30-40% of patients will undergo mastectomy as part of the surgical treatment of their breast cancer. Our immediate breast reconstruction rate at the time of mastectomy 2010-2012 was exceptionally high at 65%, against a national average of 9-12%. This rate has climbed even higher in 2014, with an immediate breast reconstruction rate of more than six times the national average. 73% of our patients undergoing mastectomy in 2014, underwent simultaneous immediate breast reconstruction, which is a great achievement.

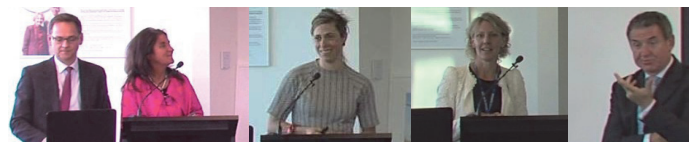


"Lifestyle Factors and Breast Cancer" Forum

To mark "Breast Cancer Awareness Month" 2014, on October 30th, The Epworth Breast Service, conducted an evening session, "Lifestyle Factors and Breast Cancer" held in the new fifth floor Epworth Medical library, which boasts impressive views over Richmond and East Melbourne. The session, organized by our Breast Care Nurse, Trish Calder, was very well attended by clinicians, allied health professionals and also many of our breast cancer patients who have completed the Epworth Breast Cancer Rehabilitation Programme, established in 2013. Speakers included specialist breast surgeon, Jane O'Brien, medical oncologist, Rick de Boer, Catherine Carracher, Epworth Rehabilitation and our new team member Dr Bridie O'Donnell, who is coordinating our long term breast cancer surveillance programme.

Bridie, who teaches motivational interviewing and health enhancement at Deakin University Medical School, gave an inspirational talk on capturing "teachable moments"; described as naturally occurring life transitions or health events that have the potential to motivate individuals to spontaneously adopt risk-reducing or health-protective behaviours. Both the diagnosis of cancer and the transition to cancer survivor are potential "teachable moments" for consideration of behavioural and lifestyle interventions, and Dr Peter Larkins, Epworth sports medicine physician, added invited comments reinforcing the value and importance of exercise in this context.

A video recording of the event can be viewed on <http://www.melbournebreastcancersurgery.com.au/>



Rick de Boer and Jane O'Brien Bridie O'Donnell Catherine Carracher Peter Larkins

Breast cancer survival rates continue to improve in Australia, with a five year overall survival of around 90%, but we continue to hear the most common concern for women following treatment for breast cancer is uncertainty about the future, and fear of a recurrence. Lifestyle factors have been linked to the risk of developing many common malignancies, including breast cancer, and, increasingly, to prognosis. Observational evidence has shown a relationship between so-called energy balance factors (ie diet, physical activity, and body weight) and risk of cancer recurrence. Interventional work has shown that individuals who make favourable changes in these lifestyle factors after cancer diagnosis feel better, experience less fatigue, and may decrease risk of cancer recurrence. Other lifestyle behaviours, such as smoking and alcohol consumption, also have important health consequences for cancer survivors.

The impact of lifestyle factors on both the risk of developing breast cancer and also the risk of recurrence is currently a hot topic. On the first of October 2014 the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) published its first ever position statement on the relationship between cancer and obesity. It clearly states that cancer clinicians must integrate obesity education and management into cancer care, and it strongly urges clinicians to address this problem openly with their patients from the time of diagnosis and routinely during all follow-up visits.

The position statement may be downloaded on <http://jco.ascopubs.org/content/32/31/3568>

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The evidence suggests lifestyle factors such as moderate levels of physical activity can reduce the risk of recurrence of breast cancer by 24% and reduce the risk of death by more than one third compared with inactive women. This means for women who feel well enough, undertaking as little as 3 hours of physical activity such as brisk walking or cycling each week could help them stay healthy.

Despite this, one in four women who have had breast cancer are not aware that lifestyle changes may significantly reduce the risk of breast cancer recurrence, according to a survey conducted by Cancer Australia and BCNA of women in Australia diagnosed with breast cancer. Additionally, the survey results showed that almost half of women who were aware of these lifestyle actions were not given information about this by any of their health professionals, so there is certainly plenty of room for improvement in this area, and ensuring all members of the health care team are educated about the importance of reinforcing lifestyle modification measures is a vital first step in the right direction.

London Breast Meeting, London, Sept 2014

Jane O'Brien attended the first "London Breast Meeting" in Sept 2014. The three day scientific symposium brought together a large international expert panel made up predominantly of plastic surgeons, who debated current controversies in reconstructive breast surgery, with instructive video sessions on operative techniques and tips by key opinion leaders. Jane also attended a practical workshop on breast reduction, mastopexy (breast lift) and managing breast asymmetry, held at the Royal College of Surgeons of England.



Epworth Breast Service Team Departures 2014

2014 has unfortunately seen the departure of two of our much liked, long standing team members; Dr Colin Stuart, who has been the key anaesthetist for the Epworth Breast Service since it's establishment in 2005, and Dr Anthony Felber, radiologist at Epworth Richmond for many years.



Dr Colin Stuart

Dr Anthony Felber

Colin Stuart, known affectionately as "Doc Holiday" by friends and colleagues (for obvious and self explanatory reasons), is off on a permanent holiday of tennis, skiing, golf and fishing, and his leaving was marked with a replica cake of his boat, Le Bateau. Anthony Felber, whose absence is hopefully only temporary, has a well known propensity for acquiring all the latest model computer equipment and useless electronic gadgets, and was presented on his last day with an oversized replica Ipad made of mud cake.

Epworth Breast Service Specialist Breast and Oncoplastic Surgeons

Fewer than 9% 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
Monash University
FRACS 2002

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