

British Oncology Pharmacy Association (BOPA) 24th Annual Symposium

The 24th British Oncology Pharmacy Association (BOPA) annual symposium was held virtually this year, with an exciting and impressive agenda and the opportunity to participate in a variety of sessions, including industry-led satellites, breakout sessions, poster exhibitions, and plenary sessions from top oncology experts. The talks were entirely interactive, as they had been in previous years. During the poster presentations delegates had the opportunity to ask speakers questions and discuss their up-to-date research.

Chemotherapy services beyond the pandemic

Dr Anne Rigg, highly respected consultant oncologist based at Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals, delivered the opening plenary session at this year's conference. Her speech entitled **“chemotherapy services beyond the pandemic”** gave an in-depth insight about cancer care during the pandemic. Dr Rigg briefly explained how the treatment options standardised to the pandemic and said: *“the interim treatment options allowed for greater flexibility in the management of cancer during Covid-19 pandemic to ensure clinicians had additional treatment options”*.

Dr Rigg also mentioned how important it is during the pandemic to employ strategies such as home-administration and improved utilisation of clinical capacity while applying interim treatment changes. Although the management of the cancer care hasn't been easy during this time, Dr Rigg emphasised that the number of patients attending for treatment had started to recover in summer 2020 and exceeded pre-pandemic levels by March 2021.

Dr Anne Rigg
Consultant Oncologist



Own your energy and be your best

Sara Milne-Rowe, one of the UK's leading performance coaches, delivered a speech about practical strategies to harness and manage energy, and tips on how to perform our best. Sara Milne-Rowe emphasised that our energy directly influences our team and as a result our patients, a domino effect.





Can immunotherapy contribute to a vision of precision cancer medicine?

An engaging talk about immunotherapy in precision cancer medicine was given by Dr Elaine Vickers, cancer educator writer and founder of science communicated. Precision cancer medicine is an emerging approach for disease treatment and prevention that considers individual variability in genes, environment, and lifestyle for each person. Dr Vickers emphasized step-by-step action on effective application of precision cancer medicine. This includes testing for a broad-spectrum of mutations, identifying actionable targets, and matching these with drugs to treat patients in the most effective manner. She also pointed out the significance of each step and questions which remain to be answered: *When should we take our samples? Do we know what to target? Do we know how to make a good drug match?*

Dr Vickers suggested that precision medicine is the future of cancer treatment, and there are reasons to be optimistic about what it can achieve for patients. In order for precision medicine to be successful, we need a wide range of treatments active against a range of different targets, which are safe enough to be given in combination. Dr Vickers emphasised the importance of good understanding of when and why different treatments do and do not work and said: *there are limitations that prevent precision medicine from fulfilling our aspirations at the current time.*

Dr Vickers also pointed out that our strategy for targeted therapies is to do more testing, and more matching but we don't always have the right drug. The dominant strategy with checkpoint inhibitors is to combine them with other treatments and bring their benefits to a greater proportion of patients.

There are reasons to believe we can get the best of both worlds...

BOPA Executive Committee election results

On the final day, Sunday 10th October, Emma Foreman announced the results of the BOPA Executive Committee elections. Colm Doody became the new industry representative and elected committee members were Nisha Shaunak, Jessica Pealing, James Clark and Emma Foreman.

Best oral presentation and poster

This year's best oral presentation goes to Carl Booth with his outstanding talk on **“An evaluation of baseline cardiovascular risk in patients receiving cardiotoxic cancer therapies”**

The lead author of the best poster of #BOPA2021 was Rajinder Nijjar with a poster title: **“A collaborative on DPYD testing of all patients initiated on fluoropyrimidines across 5 London teaching hospitals”**

BOPA Executive Committee election results
(pending ratification at AGM)

- Industry representative
 - Colm Doody
- 4 New committee members
 - Nisha Shaunak
 - Jessica Pealing
 - James Clark
 - Emma Foreman!