Breast Cancer Education Day write up

On Monday 2nd July 2018 the breast pathway board held an informative education day for clinicians across the London Cancer network. Chaired by Jasdeep Gahir (Consultant Surgeon, North Middlesex Hospital) and Emma Spurrell (Consultant Oncologist, Whittington/UCLH), this full day event had over 100 delegates attend sessions covering a wide variety of topics related to breast cancer including updates on current national policy and feedback from research studies.

The day was kicked off with an update from Helen Saunders, the programme lead for London Cancer, and Rebecca Roylance, the breast tumour pathway board director, who discussed the work of the UCLH Cancer Collaborative, the pathway board and future plans. This was followed by a presentation on psychological care in breast cancer patients. Esther Hansen (Royal Free) outlined the emotional impact breast cancer surgical treatment has on body image and relationships. Her colleague, Caroline Dancyger (Barts Health), focused on how psychological support is organised across cancer services and when to refer. Session one was concluded by Prof John Crown (St Vincent’s University Hospital, Dublin) who discussed the results of the TAILORx trial, a study which looked at the effects of chemoendocrine therapy versus endocrine therapy alone in low-risk patients.

The second session began with an emotive talk from Alison Carter, a patient who shared her experience of being diagnosed and treated at Whittington hospital. Alison took attendees through the range of emotions patients go through before, during and after a cancer diagnosis and the range of charity support available. This was followed by a talk by Petros Charalampoudis (Whittington) who explained that clinicians will not need to remove positive lymph nodes from the axilla at the time of breast cancer surgery when the patient has had neoadjuvant chemotherapy. Eilli Purser (InHealth) ended this session with a presentation highlighting why improving access in breast screening for individuals with learning disabilities is very important.

After lunch session three began with a talk from Dr Muna Ahmed (GOSH) who gave an update on patient treatment, genetics and pathology. This was followed by Prof Jamshed Bomanji (UCLH) who focused on the role of PET CT in breast cancer. Prof Bomanji showed the inner workings of a PET CT scanner and explained that these scans are best used for staging and checking for metastatic disease and shouldn’t be used for an initial diagnosis of cancer. Session three was closed by Nicola Cunningham who discussed the services offered by Breast Cancer Haven for patients who have been diagnosed with breast cancer.

Dr Ted O’Connor (KCI) began the last session by looking at the innovations and future of negative pressure on wound management following breast surgery. This was followed by Dr Arjun Ghosh’s (Barts) interesting talk on breast cancer treatment related cardiotoxicity. The final talk of the day was delivered by Garima Srivastava, Consultant Gynaecologist, (Homerton) who explained the current oncology & fertility protocols and how the process shouldn’t affect a patient’s cancer waiting time.

Attendee feedback highlighted that they mostly enjoyed the variety of the talks however there were many suggestions for what could be included at next year’s education day which included an update about stratified follow up, breakout sessions for discussions about the guidelines and the role of diet and physical activity on cancer.

“I am hugely grateful to the speakers for the high quality of the talks given. There was a good turnout on the day which is so important as it gives us the unique opportunity to meet others who work in our network.” –Emma Spurrell, Consultant Oncologist/Event Chair