



## **NINR-NCI-ONS Colloquium: Symptom Science Advances in Oncology Nursing**

In a landmark partnership, the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR), the National Cancer Institute Center for Cancer Research (NCI CCR), and the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) presented the inaugural *Colloquium on Symptom Science Advances in Oncology Nursing* on February 4-5, 2021. The virtual Colloquium brought together 818 attendees from around the globe including researchers, healthcare providers, educators, students, and fellows interested in oncology nursing and symptom science.

Welcome greetings from leadership of the sponsoring organizations kicked off the event. As part of her welcome, Dr. Shannon Zenk, the new Director of NINR, discussed disparities in symptom burden and the need for innovative research to end these disparities. She was followed by Ms. Nancy Houlihan and Dr. Lisa Kennedy Sheldon, the President and the Chief Clinical Office of ONS, respectively. Both leaders emphasized the importance of symptom science in the research agenda of ONS. Dr. Norman Sharpless, the Director of the NCI, gave his welcome address next, where he emphasized the global interest in oncology symptom science research where NCI committed through the NCI Moonshot Efforts. Dr. Tom Misteli, the Director of the NCI CCR also welcomed participants and emphasized the unique position nurses hold in improving health outcomes of oncology patients. Dr. Emily Tonorezos acknowledged her nurse mentors who contributed in shaping her scientific journey as she takes on the leadership helm of the NCI Office of Cancer Survivorship.

The Colloquium featured keynote presentations, networking opportunities, moderated poster sessions, and roundtables. The agenda featured 35 sessions including 115 poster presentations, 15 networking sessions, and roundtables on specific topics. The planned sessions addressed topics in symptom science and symptom interventions. In addition, participants had opportunities to actively engage in multiple interactive venues, such as the poster presentations and networking sessions that allowed participants to meet together in smaller groups enhancing opportunities for collaboration and discussion. The roundtable sessions provided participants the ability to discuss a variety of topics including career advancement, research methods, and funding opportunities with noted experts, senior scientists, and program directors from the NINR, NHLBI, and NCI.

Day 1 began with a keynote address by Christine Miaskowski, RN, PhD, FAAN from the University of California San Francisco on “Symptom Science in Oncology During the Pandemic” where she highlighted the need to address physiological stress and psychosocial distress during and following this pandemic. Following this, Mary Cooley, PhD, RN, FAAN of

the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute moderated a panel discussion on “Nursing Advances in Symptom Science.” As part of the panel, Leorey Saligan, PhD, RN, CRNP, FAAN, Acting Chief of the Symptom Science Center at the NINR addressed “Precision Health and Symptom Science” and revealed exciting discoveries from the NINR lab of new therapeutic targets that can address individual vulnerabilities to develop chronic symptoms related to cancer therapies. Margaret ‘Peg’ Rosenzweig, PhD, CRNP-C, AOCNP<sup>®</sup>, FAAN, of the University of Pittsburgh spoke about “Disparities and Symptom Science” and explained that racial disparities in cancer care require an organized approach to address institutional barriers and provider bias. Terri Armstrong, PhD, RN, FAAN, FAANP, of the NCI discussed “Clinical Outcomes Assessment and Risk Prediction for Symptoms and Toxicities in Therapeutic Trials” and emphasized the need to incorporate appropriate measures to assess the risk and benefit of new cancer therapies and their impact on individual health outcomes. The archived Day 1 presentations can be viewed using this link: <https://videocast.nih.gov/watch=38709>.

Day 2 included keynote presentations by Angela Starkweather, PhD, RN, ANCP-BC, CNRN, FAAN, and Betty Ferrell, MSN, PhD, FAAN, both of whom addressed the topic of “Symptom Science as a Resource for Precision Health.” Dr. Starkweather discussed the importance of assessing symptom clusters associated with cancer using specific tools and laboratory biomarkers, while Dr. Ferrell reiterated the stress of being diagnosed with cancer during the COVID-19 pandemic and the experience of isolation and loneliness. The five highest scored poster abstracts gave podium presentations. The archived Day 2 presentations can be viewed using this link: <https://videocast.nih.gov/watch=38711>.

Awards were presented to one Mid-Career Scientist and two Mentor-Mentee Partnerships as well as Outstanding Abstracts in the following topic areas: symptom science, symptom management, palliative and psychosocial care, and hot topics including COVID-19 and health disparities in cancer care. Dr. Lisa Carter-Harris of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center received the Mid-Career Scientist Award. The Mentor-Mentee awards went to: Dr. Deborah Watkins Bruner (Mentor)-Dr. Jinbing Bai (Mentee) of Emory University and Dr. Chris Miaskowski (Mentor)-Dr. Kord Kober (Mentee) of the University of California San Francisco. Award winners, as well as all abstracts from the Colloquium can be found in the *Oncology Nursing Forum* (ONF) online publication using this link: <https://voice.ons.org/news-and-views/nurse-scientists-guide-the-evidence-in-symptom-science-and-inaugural-colloquium>.

The inaugural Symptom Science Colloquium highlighted the critical role that oncology nurses play in day-to-day symptom management of people with cancer. There are opportunities for clinic nurses to collaborate with research teams, and there is a great need for further training to expand symptom expertise through mentorship. Ultimately, oncology nurses are key players in the generation of new evidence to advance symptom science and improve patient outcomes.

The Planning Committee for the Symptom Science Colloquium deserves special recognition:

#### Leadership Team

Meeting Organization Chair: Leorey Saligan PhD, RN, CRNP, FAAN (NINR)

Meeting Organization Co-Chairs: Terri Armstrong, PhD, RN, FAAN, FAANP (NCI); Mary E. Cooley PhD, RN, FAAN (ONS)

Planning Committee Members

National Institute of Nursing Research: Jeri Johnson; Paule V. Joseph PhD, MS, FNP-BC, CTN-B, FAAN; Michael Steele; Pamela Tamez, PhD

Oncology Nursing Society: Donald (Chip) Bailey PhD, RN, FAAN; Marilyn Hammer PhD, RN, FAAN; Lisa Kennedy Sheldon PhD, ANP-BC, AOCNP<sup>®</sup>, FAAN; Diane Von Ah PhD, RN, FAAN; Karen Wickersham PhD, RN