



Raj Nair

## Message from the Editor

Welcome to the second edition of our Newsletter.

In this issue, I am featuring Professor Stephen T. Sonis, a name synonymous with Oral Oncology and Oral Mucositis, one of the founding fathers of our Society. “Steve,” as we affectionately call him, was this year’s winner of ISOO Distinguished Service Award. In fact, it was Steve who introduced me to MASCC/ISOO in the late 1990s when I was a clinical fellow under his mentorship. Contrary to the usual procedure for writing about a person of significance, I have given the toughest task to Steve to write about himself, reflecting on his journey in supportive care in cancer and oral oncology and his views on what the future holds for oral oncologists. Interestingly, this turned out to be a brief history of ISOO itself! I will be featuring other leaders in the coming issues, so watch this space. Also featured this month is an update from the Mucositis Study Group and a Message from our Immediate Past-President, Ourania Nicolatou-Galitis. Please feel free to contact me via email with your suggestions and contributions. Happy reading!

Regards,

Raj Nair, Editor, *ISOO Newsletter*



Professor Ourania Nicolatou-Galitis

## A Message from the Past-President

Professor Ourania Nicolatou-Galitis

The prior two years were very productive for the International Society of Oral Oncology. ISOO has continued to promote the concept of oral oncology in alliance with the ideals of MASCC. ISOO CE Courses have remained popular and well-attended and, in 2016, we initiated ISOO Distinguished Service Awards.

ISOO has also endorsed meetings organized by other national societies, such as the Japanese Association of Oral Supportive Care in Cancer (JAOSCC), the Hellenic Society of Oral Oncology, and the Hellenic Society of Head and Neck Cancer for 2016 and 2017, and has been active in promoting oral supportive care around the world.

ISOO has also formed a new collaboration with the ASCO Palliative and Supportive Care in Oncology Symposium in 2016, within the framework of MASCC’s official participation. The 2017 ASCO Palliative and Supportive Care in Oncology Symposium was held on October 27th and 28th in San Diego, California. “The Conversation: A Revolutionary Plan for End-of-Life Care,” by Angelo Volandes, was among many impressive presentations. Several MASCC and ISOO members participated in the San Diego program, including Eduardo Bruera, Andrea

Cheville, Thomas LeBlanc, Charles Loprinzi, Sandra Mitchell, Rudolph Navari, Ira R. Parker, Eric Roeland, and Thomas Smith. ISOO President Allan Hovan and I had the great opportunity to highlight the role, value, and contributions of oral supportive oncology to the wellbeing of the cancer patient.

I want to express my sincere thanks to the ISOO Board, which offered me the honor and unique opportunity and experience to serve as the ISOO President and I invite you all to the Vienna Meeting in June, 2018



Professor Stephen T Sonis

## Once Upon A Time...

By Professor Stephen T Sonis

I've had a fascination with oral complications of cancer therapy since my residency, when I was fortunate enough to spend a lot of time at the Sidney Farber Cancer Center, now the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. I started to study the subject formally after my fellowship, but didn't publish on the topic until 1978. Soon after, Doug Peterson contacted me to discuss mutual interests. At the time, Doug was at the University of Maryland. It turned out that he and I were professional soulmates. After dental school, Doug completed his doctorate with Isaiah (Josh) Fidler, an icon in tumor biology, especially around metastases, and then went on to study oral infections in myelosuppressed cancer patients. My doctoral thesis described the role of antibody-dependent cell-mediated cytotoxicity in tumor biology and my post-doc dealt with predicting tumor (leukemia) response to various chemotherapeutic agents. At any rate, our shared backgrounds and interests sparked a collaboration and friendship that continues. I ended up visiting Doug in Baltimore to discuss how we might move the "field" forward. At that point, Doug introduced me to an upcoming colleague with whom he had worked on assessing oral complications associated with the then totally new field of bone marrow transplant. Thus was Mark Schubert drafted into the fold.

Doug and I concluded that a way to jump-start the endeavor might be to convene a conference of an eclectic group of individuals, not defined by degree, but by their shared interests in the role of oral health in patients' response to cancer therapy. Taking advantage of Doug's superior organizational skills and with funding from industry, we held a conference at a Baltimore-Washington Airport hotel. Since we wanted to include our residents, I recall our renting a station wagon, loading it with residents (yes – third seat and all), and in the spirit of Chevy Chase's quest for Walley World in the National Lampoon movie *Vacation* (1983), setting off early on a Sunday morning (Peter Lockhart riding shotgun).

The meeting was even more productive than we'd hoped – not only in content, but in being able to consolidate a core group of clinician scientists who reported on substantive issues and data. Two significant consequences resulted from that first conference: Doug and I edited a short book titled *Oral Complications of Cancer Chemotherapy*, and we identified a core group of individuals who would subsequently form the nidus of a then-unanticipated organization. A sampling of the authorship of the book provides some insight into those who contributed to the field in its formative years: Joe Asner and Steve Schimpff, med-oncs from Maryland, Sam Dreizen, a dual degree doc (DDS, MD) from the University of Texas, Houston, dentists Ed Truelove, Peter Lockhart, Mark Schubert and Dan Overholser, as well as Joyce O'Dwyer, a nurse, and Lisa Williams, a dental hygienist. The book thus set the stage for a culture of inclusivity that still prevails today.

The enthusiasm and critical mass of interested and active individuals encouraged us to organize a second meeting. And so, in 1984, Doug, Mark and I, along with Spencer Reading put together a conference in Boston to share experiences and discuss next steps. As in Baltimore, the meeting attracted individuals with a range of professional backgrounds who were also geographically diverse. We also concluded that the advances in oncology care, the resultant myriad of oral side effects, and the lack of a coordinated, dedicated group of professionals interested in the topic warranted the creation of a new entity. Hence the formation of The Society for Clinical and Experimental Oral Oncology.

As they say, the rest is history. The name of the group changed to the ISOO. With the founding of MASCC in 1990, Doug recognized the opportunity to capitalize on shared interests and worked diligently with others to establish a booming and successful alliance. Oral oncology has evolved from a descriptive science to one that is totally dynamic. After all, the oral and perioral anatomy (hard tissue, different types of mucosa, skin, nerves, etc.) and environment (saliva, blood, microbiome, innate and adaptive immunity, etc.) are unique, easily observed and sampled. So they have provided a platform for a range of studies that have led to a better understanding of the pathogenesis of oral complications of cancer therapy, but more importantly, have provided targets for the development of treatments.

On a personal level, I have benefitted from the efforts of the colleagues named above and many others, too numerous to mention here. ISOO and MASCC have led to friendships, collaborations, and chances to share and discuss the science and practice of supportive care. Unfortunately cancer is not going away. But new therapies are continuously evolving — though none without toxicities. We have huge opportunities and challenges to impact patients' ability to receive optimum anti-cancer therapy with the least clinical cost.

*Dr Sonis is Senior Surgeon at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Professor of Oral Medicine at Harvard and Chief Scientific Officer, Biomodels, Boston, Massachusetts, USA*

## Mucositis Study Group News

The Mucositis Study Group (MSG) of MASCC/ISOO periodically updates its clinical practice guidelines for the management of mucositis. The latest update of the guidelines was published in 2014. During the last year, the MSG has been working on a new update. Following an extensive systematic review conducted by MSG members, the group convened in Washington in June, 2017 to discuss the current findings.



Due to its broad scope, the topic was divided into 9 classes of clinical interventions. Over 14,690 papers were identified in the literature search and were triaged. Over 627 publications met the inclusion and exclusion criteria and were reviewed in detail. Following the presentation of each section, an open discussion brought up excellent feedback from the group. Likewise, many conceptual ideas were voiced, and we believe this will strengthen the results of the systematic review and the mucositis guidelines. Currently, the MSG is working to address these comments and to merge the data retrieved during the systematic review with the database developed during the previous guidelines update.

The MSG is fortunate to have a wonderful group of members who volunteered to take part in the systematic review and guidelines update. This engagement of the members in MSG activities is phenomenal and is evident whenever a call for volunteers is sent out. We take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the enthusiastic response of the MSG members. You are making the MSG successful.



While the guidelines update is ongoing, the MSG leaders are preparing for the 2018 MASCC/ISOO Annual Meeting. We work closely with the Study Group Coordinator and the Annual Meeting's Organizing Committee. Stay tuned for the MSG updates. More to come!

Sharon Elad, Paolo Bossi and Karis Cheng  
*MASCC Study Group Chair and Vice-chairs*

## What's New in the Scientific World?

Digital Pill: The US FDA has approved Abilify MyCite (aripiprazole tablets with sensor), a pill with a sensor that digitally tracks whether patients have ingested the medication. The feasibility of a "digital pill" in oncology is yet to be determined.

For more information and a press release, see: <https://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm584933.htm>

## Recruit a Colleague

Please introduce a colleague or friend who is interested in the ISOO to become a member. Being a MASCC and ISOO member has great benefits, such as reduced registration rates at annual meetings, the opportunity to meet and collaborate with international experts, online access to our journal, *Supportive Care in Cancer*, and much more.

## Meet a New ISOO Member • Introduce Yourself!

This section is dedicated to new members. If you have joined ISOO recently, please send me ([r.nair@griffith.edu.au](mailto:r.nair@griffith.edu.au)) a brief bio, your personal interests, and a photograph.

## Share the News

Do you have an article or news that you would like to share? Please contact Raj, [r.nair@griffith.edu.au](mailto:r.nair@griffith.edu.au)

# MASCC/ISOO

## ANNUAL MEETING ON SUPPORTIVE CARE IN CANCER

*Save the Date!*



# 2018

28-30 JUNE  
VIENNA, AUSTRIA

SUPPORTIVE CARE  
MAKES EXCELLENT  
CANCER CARE POSSIBLE



[www.mascc.org/meeting](http://www.mascc.org/meeting)

