

BROADCAST VIEWS

A Nationally Born, Locally Grown Periodical

Dentistry's Role in the Oncology Team

By *Catrice Opichka*

As healthcare improves, life expectancy is also continually increasing. There are now viable options to fight conditions previously considered terminal. Cancer care formerly accessible at a few isolated treatment centers around the world is now available locally for most people. This means we will see more patients facing the many side effects of cancer treatment and their intraoral implications.

A diagnosis of cancer is overwhelming for anyone. With all of the things these patients need to consider—diet change, time commitments, lifestyle changes and the often-unpredictable course of the disease—it's easy for dental care to become a low priority. It is imperative to become a part of the oncology team from the earliest stages of diagnosis and educate our patients on how we can help them avoid or reduce some of the common side effects of their cancer treatment.

Dr. Dennis Abbott is an expert in this field. In his practice in Dallas, Texas, Dr. Abbott cares for patients suffering from the oral effects of cancer treatment such as xerostomia, bisphosphonate-related osteonecrosis of the jaw (BRONJ), oral mucositis, oral infections and other conditions. He has extensive experience managing complex cases of medically compromised patients and is a strong advocate for including a dental oncology specialist as a key member of a comprehensive cancer care team.

According to Dr. Abbott, understanding the relationship between oral health and the patient's overall systemic condition is critically important to effective cancer care. It's crucial to stabilize any areas of disease or structural breakdown prior to beginning oncology treatment. Once the cancer-fighting drugs compromise the patient's immune system these problems can become amplified. This is the time that thorough home care instructions are very important. Keeping the mouth as clean as possible will help minimize many secondary issues as treatment progresses. We need to remember what works for one patient is not going to work for every patient and customize the care we're giving. Companies like PerioSciences, 3M and Sunstar have many products on the market that can offer relief.

Managing the oral health of patients with cancer is a complex challenge.

Radiation and chemotherapy ravage the patient's body and often the oral tissues take an unintended but vicious hit. During the course of treatment, immunosuppression and the direct and indirect effects of the cancer therapies can increase susceptibility to infection, pain and other oral complications in many patients. For some, these deleterious effects can last a lifetime. Dental practitioners can and should be part of the oncology team that helps cancer patients at each stage of their journey.

In the true spirit of the Seattle Study Club, PerioSciences is bringing Dr. Abbott to the 2013 Symposium. To schedule an individual consultation with Dr. Abbott during Symposium, contact Norberto Diaz at Norberto@dopnt.com. For more information about Dr. Abbott and his practice, visit his website at www.dopnt.com.

Symposium Soundtracks

By *Shaida Ghomi*

Those of you who've been to Symposium know to expect excellent music. In January 2012, we introduced you to Mycle Westman before you saw him on NBC's *The Voice*. We are also quite familiar with the talented LeRoy Bell, who was on *The X Factor* last year before joining us at Symposium for a second time. And anyone who was in Maui for the 2008 Symposium will never forget our intimate night with Sara Bareills. Once she achieved mainstream success I was lucky enough to be able to show off her autographed CD and a photo of the two of us from that evening.

Dr. Cohen and Suzanne have quite a knack for finding amazing musicians yet to be discovered. As I watch Symposium favorites start on our stage and later become huge successes, I find myself looking over the list of entertainers and trying to predict who will be the next big thing. I think we have at least two for our upcoming Symposium. The first is Amber Hayes—she's a small town Oklahoma girl with an incredible voice. She'll help us kick off the week at our 20th Anniversary "down home" dinner and dance Monday night. You may also want to pay special attention to Allen Stone. You can see him on YouTube.com performing soul-filled songs live from his mother's living room. Sounds odd, I know, but check him out, I have no doubt he is going to bring down the house!

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