

British Columbia Cancer Agency Centre for Lymphoid Cancer *Newsletter* *Lymphoma ♦ Leukemia ♦ Myeloma*

Volume 4, Number 1

dedicated to curing the lymphoid cancers

March 2014

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About this Newsletter

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide a brief summary of the projects underway throughout our *Centre for Lymphoid Cancer* program, the people that work on them, and useful information on upcoming events. Publication of this Newsletter has only been intermittent in the past; however, with the arrival of several new personnel we hope to be able to increase its frequency in the future. Its value can be enhanced if we hear from you, the readers, with suggestions for future content. Comments or suggestions can be sent to clc@bccancer.bc.ca. We will not be able to acknowledge each one but we do promise to read them all and use them to guide our choice of topics for future Newsletters.

If you know of others who would like to receive future copies of this Newsletter have them send their email address to clc@bccancer.bc.ca.

New research team member

We would like to introduce and congratulate Dr. David Scott who is joining the CLC as a new scientist and clinician after three years as a research fellow working with Dr Randy Gascoyne. David is the recipient of the BC Cancer Agency Clinician Scientist Award, funded by the BC Cancer Foundation. Clinician Scientists are directly engaged in both patient care and research and, thus, are well-positioned to serve as bridges between the research lab and the

clinic. This award will provide salary support for five years. David has also been awarded the BC Cancer Foundation Mercier Fellowship award, which will provide research funding for his projects focused on chronic lymphocytic leukemia and other lymphoid cancers.

David earned his MBChB and PhD in Auckland, New Zealand, where he trained as a hematologist and hematopathologist. He came to Vancouver in 2010 as a Research Fellow in the laboratory of Dr Randy Gascoyne, in the *Centre for Lymphoid Cancer*, where his research has focused on Hodgkin lymphoma, looking at prognostic biomarkers in the tumor microenvironment, and diffuse large B-cell lymphoma, correlating aberrations in gene expression in lymphoma and microenvironmental cells with clinical outcomes. Over the coming years he will continue to examine the causes of treatment failure in these lymphomas while adding research into chronic lymphocytic leukemia.



Dr David Scott

Personalized Treatment of Lymphoid Cancer: BC as a Model Province

Thanks to new research, scientists can now decode many of the genetic instructions in both normal and malignant cells. Armed with this information, doctors can create novel medications that specifically target the mutated (altered) genes that drive cancer cells to display their malignant behaviour. Such new chemotherapy drugs are especially desirable because they selectively target malignant cells while sparing normal cells. Lymphoid cancers are already known to be special because even when they have spread widely in the body they can often still be cured with chemotherapy. Recent research employing genomic sequencing (identification of the specific sequence of chemicals making up our genes) allows recognition of special aspects of lymphoid cancers that cannot be cured today but which could be treated more effectively using personally designed treatments in the future.

In a very exciting new project funded by Genome Canada, Genome BC, the Canadian Institutes for Health Research and the BC Cancer Foundation, the *Centre for Lymphoid Cancer's* research team is applying genetic sequencing to lymphoid cancers in patients from all across British Columbia. This project will demonstrate how to apply the newest techniques of genomic analysis to personalize the diagnosis and treatment of patients with lymphoma and lymphocytic leukemia. Broadly, genomic analysis identifies which genes are turned on or off in malignant cells and the specific mutations these cells have developed that make lymphoid cancer cells resistant to standard treatment. We will also systematically study the costs, benefits and economic factors that most influence the cost-effectiveness of these new genomic techniques.

When successfully completed this project will have built a province wide system making rapid genomic analysis available for patients with lymphoid cancer across the entire of British Columbia. This research is using British Columbia as a pilot project to show how to use genomic analysis to cost-effectively cure more cancer patients in a way that can readily be duplicated elsewhere around the world.

Lymphoid Cancer Education Day 04 April 2014

On Friday April 4, 2014 more than 200 patients, family members and friends interested in the lymphoid cancers will gather at the Jewish Community Center at the 41st and Oak (950 West 41st Ave) for the annual BCCA-CLC Lymphoid Cancer Education Day. Presentations by researchers from the BC Cancer Agency, the BC Cancer Research Center and the BCCA Genome Sciences Center will address the basic biology, causes, inheritance and new treatments for lymphoid cancers and related patient advocacy for research and health care funding.

Breakout groups focused on Hodgkin lymphoma, indolent lymphoma, aggressive lymphoma and myeloma will allow participants to ask specific questions and to have an informal open discussion with a lymphoid cancer specialist. Additional sessions focused on coping with the impact of lymphoid cancer, supportive measures and other topics of interest to patients, family members and friends are in the program.

Participants have valued these Education Days in the past as helpful and informative. The opportunity to network and the array of informational materials from the *Centre for Lymphoid Cancer*, the Lymphoma Foundation Canada and the Leukemia Lymphoma Society are particularly valuable. We will continue to offer a Lymphoid Cancer Education Day annually and invite you to identify topics of interest.

Details about Lymphoid Cancer Education Day: <http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/ABCCA/comingevents/default>. Seating is limited and the event usually fills up so be sure to register by phoning 604-877-6000 extension 672196 (outside Vancouver call 1-800-663-3333 extension 672196).

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