November 2014 (QOL-15) Competition Awarded Quality of Life Research Grants
Listed in alphabetical order

QOL  Quality of Life Panel

Dawson, Laura
Ontario Cancer Institute/PMCC - UHN
A phase III study of palliative radiotherapy for symptomatic hepatocellular carcinoma and liver metastases
Advanced liver cancer is often not treatable and causes pain that is hard to control. In a prior study, Dr Laura Dawson found that low-dose radiation therapy reduced cancer-related pain in liver cancer patients. In this new clinical trial, she will compare the effectiveness of radiation vs. standard supportive care alone in improving pain in patients with advanced liver cancer who are not candidates for standard therapy. By determining an improved pain management strategy, this study could have a huge impact on quality of life for cancer patients in palliative care.

Harris, Cheryl
Ottawa Hospital Research Institute
Randomized controlled trial of the effectiveness of online treatment for insomnia in cancer survivors and evaluation of treatment-related side-effects
Chronic insomnia is much more common in cancer survivors than in the general population, affecting more than 1 in 4 survivors. Canadian guidelines recommend Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I), which helps people manage sleep-disrupting moods such as anxiety. Unfortunately, CBT-I is not routinely available at cancer centres, and there is limited information about its side effects. Dr Cheryl Harris will test the effectiveness and monitor side effects of an online CBT-I program for patients diagnosed with cancer-related insomnia. If this program proves effective, it could help cancer survivors – regardless of their location – sleep better and have more energy.

Nieman, Brian
The Hospital for Sick Children
Characterizing the impact of chemotherapy on the developing brain
Effective treatments like chemotherapy are allowing more children to survive leukemia. Unfortunately, treating a developing brain with chemotherapy can have long-term consequences on the ability of these survivors to think, focus and learn. Dr Brian Nieman will use magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to study the brain structure of survivors with these impairments and to measure brain changes in mice after different types of chemotherapy. This research will provide important information about which chemotherapies are the most dangerous to brain development and could lead to new approaches to treating leukemia without harming the patient’s future quality of life.

Peacock, Stuart
BC Cancer Agency (Vancouver)
Identifying the most effective multi-attribute utility instruments to guide cancer funding decisions in Canada
In the Canadian healthcare system, provinces use many sources of evidence to decide which drugs are covered by health plans. One of these is “utility,” a measure used in economics to reflect an individual’s preference for a given state of health. In this research Dr Stuart Peacock will compare two new cancer-specific surveys in a sample of the Canadian population to calculate a measure of utility for cancer drugs, and then match this to existing clinical trial data. By identifying the survey that best captures this measure of utility, this research will provide an essential new tool to help guide decisions about which cancer drugs should be covered by provincial health plans.