Society of Gynecologic Oncologists

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MD*

By Andrew Berchuck, MD

The Society of Gynecologic Oncologists (SGO) is committed to improving the care of women with gynecologic cancers. Founded in 1968, its original purpose was to identify the principles, knowledge, and skills related to gynecologic malignancies; guide the development of a subspecialty devoted exclusively to this field;

and promote research, education, and practice of the subspecialty. SGO has grown to more than 1,100 members.

Since its inception, SGO has sought to advance the care of women with reproductive cancers by advocating for specialized training programs. In the early 1970s, SGO worked closely with the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology to create a recognized subspecialty of gynecologic oncology. This included guidelines for training in fellowship programs following completion of residency in obstetrics and gynecology, as well as a process for subspecialty board certification that included both a written and oral examination. More recently, this has evolved to include mandatory recertification every 6 years.

Essentially all practicing gynecologic oncologists in the United States are SGO members and receive its official journal, *Gynecologic Oncology*. A main focal point of the SGO calendar is the Annual Meeting on Women's Cancer™, which is held in February or March of each year. The conference has grown steadily over time, and during the 2006 meeting, 1,300 attendees heard talks ranging from ovarian cancer screening to the quality of life of patients treated by open versus laparoscopic surgery for endometrial cancer.

SGO also works to help educate other medical professionals who care for women who suffer with gynecologic cancer or are at risk of developing it. The organization recently launched a physician education awareness campaign that addresses emerging topics in gynecologic cancers and provides expert education to obstetricians/gynecologists, family practitioners, medical oncologists, internists, oncologists, and nurses. The first two topics covered in the campaign are the new cervical cancer vaccine and hereditary cancer.

In addition, SGO has worked diligently to ensure that the nation's policy makers support education and research

programs that affect gynecologic cancers. In collaboration with other professional and advocacy groups, including ASCO, SGO's Government Relations Committee has advocated for continued funding for gynecologic cancer research at the federal level. Research funded by Specialized Projects of Research Excellence (SPORes) in ovarian cancer and uterine cancer has resulted in the development of molecular markers and other early-detection tools that may soon be ready for clinical trials.

SGO also is closely allied with the Gynecologic Oncology Group (GOG), a National Cancer Institute-funded cooperative cancer research group that "focuses its research on women with pelvic malignancies, such as cancer of the ovary, uterus, and cervix." The GOG is recognized as the leader in the development of new procedures in each of the relevant diagnostic and therapeutic disciplines. Currently, more than 3,300 patients are registered each year to GOG research trials. GOG trials were instrumental in establishing the value of adding chemotherapy to radiation in the primary treatment of cervical cancer, and have suggested the value of intraperitoneal administration of chemotherapy for patients with advanced ovarian cancer who have undergone optimal cytoreductive surgery. To raise awareness of early detection and prevention of gynecologic cancer, SGO has partnered with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, the Ovarian Cancer Control Initiative, and the Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Program.

SGO has also brought outreach, education, and research initiatives to its own front door. In 1991, SGO formed the Gynecologic Cancer Foundation (GCF). GCF has developed a survivor's course and telephone workshop series, outreach courses aimed at Spanish-speaking populations, a full library of brochures and pamphlets dedicated to women's health, the Women's Cancer Network Web site, (www.wcn.org), the National Cervical Cancer Public Education Campaign, and an educational Web site (www.gcf.org). GCF has awarded over \$3 million in funding to more than 50 investigators since 1995. This past year, GCF offered 11 awards to outstanding researchers, many of whom are new investigators.

An ASCO/SGO Liaison Task Force has been established to work to further the common goals of each organization and facilitate the exchange of scientific and other information, including genetic testing, targeted therapies, and palliative care. SGO was pleased to have the opportunity to contribute its input to the recent update of the ASCO Strategic Plan.

Although SGO has grown in size and stature over the years, its primary purpose has remained the same: to improve the care of patients with gynecologic cancers; to advance knowledge and raise standards of practice; to encourage research; and to cooperate with others interested in oncology and related fields.

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The January 2007 Clinical Research article contained an error in the spelling of an interviewee's name. The text read "Shaker Dahkil, MD," whereas it should have read "Shaker Dakhil, MD."

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JOP Online Moves to HighWire Press Platform

Oncology professionals benefit from a more complete, useful, and effective online browsing and searching experience since *JOP Online* moved to the HighWire Press platform on January 24, 2007.

The new Web site (<http://jop.ascopubs.org>) will continue to house *JOP* articles back to Volume 1, Issue 1 (May 2004), but will now allow readers to take advantage of robust online functionality:

- The ability to search the *JOP* archive by citation, author, topic, issue, keyword, or DOI number
- The option to simultaneously search across *JOP*, *JCO*, and more than 1,000 other top medical journals hosted by HighWire Press using a single login
- The power to customize reading and research by utilizing optional e-mail alerts, PDA downloads of *JOP* content, and PowerPoint downloads of figures