

*Inside this issue*

## Pointing the way

Lee S. Schwartzberg, MD, FACP, Editor-in-Chief | The West Clinic, Memphis, TN

I just returned from our city's Race for the Cure, an incredible event bringing together 13,500 people of different ages and from diverse backgrounds, all with one goal: to support the eradication of breast cancer. Rather than running myself, I assumed my customary position near the finish line, encouraging all—especially the patients, survivors, and families known to me—as they crossed the finish line in this important physical and symbolic journey.

The race is the culmination of a month of breast cancer-related education, screening, and fund raising. And after years of advocacy, the results are tangible: since 1991, breast cancer deaths in this country have dropped some 15%.

This month's issue of *Community Oncology* continues the focus on recent advances in breast cancer in two major articles. First, in our Community Translations section now headed by Jame Abraham, MD, where we explore multiple facets of the STAR trial (Study of Tamoxifen and Raloxifene), beginning on page 699. Starting with a cogent summary of the trial data, Dr. Steven Jubelirer discusses the quality-of-life considerations in deciding whether tamoxifen or raloxifene is the best choice for a given patient. Jean Rosiak, RN, offers a very useful summary table of the risks and benefits of each drug, a guide for patients that you can download from our Web site. Finally, Robert Orzechowski supplies the critical perspective of the practice administrator helping the patient negotiate costs of taking one of these medications. This new format is designed to provide a comprehensive analysis of the clinical and practical aspects of new drugs or regimens.

Moving from prevention to early detection, we are also featuring, on page 727, an article on the role of MRI in breast imaging. Although this technology has assumed an important position in breast imaging, many questions remain about how best to utilize it. Drs. Virginia Herrmann and Joseph Borelli examine the current indications for breast MRI and point out areas for further research.

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And speaking of research, Lee Scheible, RPh, provides a wonderful vision for the future of community-based clinical research organized around a centralized model. See our Implementing Clinical Trials section on page 709 for that. Complimenting Mr. Scheible's detailed analysis is a fascinating interview on page 704 with Dr. Atul Dhir who is leading the way in community-based tissue banking. Together these articles provide a creative new blueprint for those of us concerned about the bottleneck in evaluating the large number of promising anti-cancer agents.

Rounding out this issue is a thorough review on aspects of cancer care in the elderly, including differences in drug metabolism and toxicity by Dr. Stewart Lichtman, an expert in geriatric oncology (see page 730). On page 719, Dr. Casey O'Connell and associates address the ubiquitous problem of venous thromboembolism in cancer patients with a summary of the latest clinical trial data and recommendations for prevention and treatment of the condition. These articles provide reference material that is critical to our daily practice.

In looking back at the Race for the Cure, it was both humbling and inspiring to scan the lengthy list of local names posted at the starting line commemorating the survivors and honoring the memories of those who succumbed to breast cancer. I think of *Community Oncology* as our way of providing one more signpost pointing towards the finish line for conquering breast and all other types of cancer.



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