

1st NCCN Asia Scientific Symposium Report

The NCCN 1st Asia Scientific Symposium and NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology™ China edition panel meeting, authorized by NCCN and organized by NCCN's official representative in Asia, EMD Healthcare Group, was held March 29-30, 2008 at the China World Hotel, Beijing, China. This was truly an exhilarating milestone event in oncology in China as well as the Asia-Pacific region.

NCCN is a renowned academic alliance of 21 leading cancer centers in the United States that are representative of the highest standard of American oncology research and cancer treatment. The NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology™ are developed by prominent multidisciplinary oncology experts through an explicit review of the evidence integrated with expert medical judgment. Updated on a continual basis, the NCCN Guidelines maintain coherence, impartiality, scholasticism, and applicability, and have become not only the principal standard in American oncology, but also highly referenced in international oncology practice. The NCCN Guidelines received wide use and recognition in Asia, and are held in high regard by oncologists in China.

The goal of this Asia Scientific Symposium was to enable NCCN services to reach a broader population of patients with cancer in Asia and to further increase familiarity and understanding of the NCCN Guidelines among Asian oncologists. During the meeting, Dr. William T. McGivney, NCCN CEO, and Ms. Joan S. McClure, NCCN Senior Vice President of Clinical Information & Publications, led a team of over ten internationally

renowned oncology experts in their live presentation of the latest NCCN Guidelines for nine common cancer types as well as highlights of the NCCN annual conference.

A Spectacular Team

The attending NCCN experts, being world-authoritative leaders in each of their respective oncology fields, were heavily involved in the development and review of the NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology™. They include: NCCN Colon Cancer Guidelines Panelist, Dr. Al B. Benson III (Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University); Breast Cancer Guidelines Chair, Dr. Robert W. Carlson (Stanford Comprehensive Cancer Center); Cervical Cancer Guidelines Co-Chair, Dr. Benjamin E. Greer (Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center/Seattle Cancer Care Alliance); Gastric Cancer Guidelines Panelist, Dr. David H. Ilson (Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center); Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer Guidelines Panelist, Dr. Mohammad Jahanzeb (St. Jude Children's Research Hospital/University of Tennessee Cancer Institute); Kidney Cancer Guidelines Panelist, Dr. Timothy M. Kuzel (Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University); Ovarian Cancer Guidelines Chair, Dr. Robert J. Morgan (City of Hope); Rectal Cancer Guidelines Panelist, Dr. Alan P. Venook (UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center); and Non-Hodgkin's Lymphomas Guidelines Chair, Dr. Andrew D. Zelenetz (Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center). At the meeting, these experts had face-to-face interaction with fellow oncologists from China and the Asia-Pacific, introducing the

latest updates on the 2008 NCCN Guidelines and the corresponding evidence from recent clinical trials.

Asia-Pacific Exchange

This Symposium also attracted Asian oncology experts from India, Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Australia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau. The NCCN Colon Cancer and Kidney Cancer Guidelines sessions saw brilliant presentations by prominent Chinese experts alongside Asia-Pacific experts, including Dr. Stephen Clarke (The University of Sydney/Concord Repatriation General Hospital, Australia); Dr. Rico KY Liu (The University of Hong Kong/Queen Mary Hospital); Dr. ZY Wang (Kaohsiung Medical University/Chung-Ho Memorial Hospital, Taiwan); Dr. Ian Davis (The University of Melbourne/Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research, Australia); Dr. Tay Miah Hiang (OncoCare Cancer Centre, Singapore); and Dr. Sun Young Rha (Yonsei University College of Medicine/Cancer Metastasis Research Center, Korea). Due to geographical and ethnical similarities, there are numerous clinical issues to be shared and learned across the Asia-Pacific region. The excitement and satisfaction arising from this precious opportunity to interact and communicate with fellow oncologists was evident on the face of every participant.

Mainland Clinicians

Over a thousand Chinese oncology experts and clinicians were invited to attend the NCCN Asia Scientific Symposium. The lively atmosphere of the meeting reached its height as enthusiastic physicians, in addition to listening to presentations, actively brought up clinical obstacles and problems, participated in discussion with the experts, and shared their viewpoints and ideas. Sessions were virtually jam-packed with attentive clinicians filling the side walks and back rows. Information handouts quickly ran out, illustrating the desire for NCCN Guidelines on oncology clinical practice in China. Participating clinicians reflected on the high experience, exceptional qualifications, and deep insights of the speakers. These became the hallmark of this symposium, which was applauded by attendees on its rich content and applicability.

NCCN Guidelines China Editions

To further push international oncology clinical standards to new heights, NCCN has been dedicating continuous efforts to globally disseminate its resources including its NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology™. Since 2006, NCCN has been in close collaboration with Chinese oncology experts headed by Dr. Yan Sun in developing the China edition of the NCCN Guidelines. This project achieved huge success in China, and is under rapid expansion. In making full use of the present opportunity for summit discussion, this symposium especially incorporated panel meetings of NCCN experts and Chinese experts to update the China versions of available NCCN Guidelines as well as develop new NCCN Guidelines. Experts from China paid high attention to the development of NCCN Guidelines that are especially tailored to China's situation. Their

intense research on relevant clinical evidence before the meeting and lucid presentation of their viewpoint and findings during the discussion gained wide recognition from NCCN Panel Members. The resulting updated China editions of NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology™, created through the joint efforts of Chinese experts and NCCN experts, shall be instrumental in pushing forward the standardization of clinical oncology practice in China.

Feedback

Random interviews of participating clinicians conducted during session breaks revealed an overwhelmingly positive response. Participants stressed the importance of this NCCN Asia Scientific Symposium to clinical practice, the deepening of their own understanding to specific clinical obstacles and hot-topics derived from listening to presentations by respective experts, and the excellent organization of the managing personnel which provided an effective learning atmosphere.

In addition, attending Chinese experts and clinicians called for the establishment and refinement of oncology standards in the country as well as broader distribution of the updated NCCN Guidelines and contents of this symposium, in order to allow more convenient access to these resources for community physicians.

The NCCN 1st Asia Scientific Symposium provided an invaluable opportunity for Asian oncologists to absorb the latest international advances and share clinical experiences. It is

our belief that this symposium will have a great impact on standardizing Asian clinical practice in oncology, modifying paradigms, enhancing multidisciplinary cooperation, and raising treatment standards. Patients with cancer in Asia shall see a better tomorrow.

Comments from participants

Asia-Pacific clinicians

Attending clinician, Indonesia



This symposium invited many internationally renowned experts with very strong academic backgrounds, and provided a great opportunity to interact with NCCN experts and fellow Asian oncologists. Although I also refer to several European guidelines in my practice, I feel that the NCCN Guidelines are most reliable, and that evidence-based clinical decisions are safest for patients. This is a multidisciplinary event; my only regret is not being able to attend several sessions at the same time.

Attending clinician, The Philippines



The NCCN Guidelines have a huge influence in international oncology, and is important in guiding our clinical practice. At present, the Philippines still lacks guidelines like those of the China edition of NCCN Guidelines. For this I commend fellow oncologists in China. We came with a learning attitude and hope that we will soon have our own guidelines as well. I am very satisfied with the contents, organization and personnel support of this meeting.

Chinese experts and clinicians

Dr. Zhongzhen Guan, Sun Yat-Sen University Cancer Center



EMD's organization of the event is excellent. I am very satisfied with the pre-meeting information on the experts as well as the guidance given by the experts on multiple sessions.

Dr. Shangmei Liu, Cancer Institute & Hospital, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences



Veteran clinicians in oncology are particularly concerned with multidisciplinary medicine. Lateral connections are essential to their practice and a high-quality symposium such as this suits them well.

Dr. Zihao Yu, Cancer Institute & Hospital, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences



The NCCN Guidelines are our clinical standard, but community hospitals lack complete clinical regulatory systems so there will be some difficulty in ensuring broad application, especially for multidisciplinary cooperation. This symposium is highly meaningful; hopefully there will be level-by-level education starting with core experts from major cancer centers. I am most supportive of annual panel meetings to update the NCCN Guidelines!

Dr. Wen Di, Shanghai Renji Hospital



Because clinical trials for evidence-based medicine is still lacking in China, the NCCN Guidelines are a very important clinical reference. It is specific, applicable, and based on abundant clinical data. Chinese doctors can really learn from these.

Dr. Lingying Wu, Cancer Institute & Hospital, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences



The NCCN Guidelines form 90% of our clinical reference, especially for rare cancer types. Due to financial and technical limitations, however, community hospitals may not be able to fully follow the NCCN Guidelines. One advantage of the NCCN Guidelines is that it can be conveniently downloaded from the internet, thus allowing us to keep up to date with international advances. Participating in the symposium enables us to discuss with experts on topics that still lacks high-level evidence.

Dr. Li, Beijing China-Japan Friendship Hospital



Exchange events like this are beneficial to China's connection with other countries in terms of standards in chemotherapy and radiation. In treating chemotherapy patients at present, we are consulting the NCCN Guidelines while also adjusting regimens and dosages according to the physical conditions of Chinese patients. Therefore developing China's own edition of the NCCN Guidelines is vital.

Dr. Zhou, Liaoning Anshan Fourth Hospital



We have been following the NCCN Guidelines on the internet since 2003. It is regularly updated and evidence-based, and is very useful in clinical practice. It is even better to have the meeting here; some of my queries were explained by the experts and understanding deepened with direct interaction. This kind of academic meeting is helpful in encouraging Chinese physicians to start clinical trials and build their own evidence. Since most Chinese clinicians speak limited English, I hope the whole meeting has live translation to facilitate understanding.

Dr. Wei Wang, Liaoning Center Hospital of Jinzhou



We learned a lot through live discussion of the newest clinical evidence for the updates. I suggest putting the contents of this symposium on the internet for clinicians who could not attend. Participating doctors can also learn about updates of guidelines outside their own specialization.

Dr. Zhai, Shanxi Cancer Hospital



It is important to learn about the NCCN Guidelines annually to obtain the latest news. Other ways to learn such as through the internet, newspapers and magazines are also suitable for clinicians and can reach a broader base.

Dr. Yan, Beijing Cancer Hospital



The NCCN Guidelines are quite well applied among general hospitals, notably for breast, colon and gynecological malignancies. This type of guidelines is much needed; more importantly, it needs to be in context of local conditions.

Dr. Yan, Beijing Chao-Yang Hospital



The format of the meeting is great. The NCCN Guidelines is not totally in line with China's situation, so it is necessary to develop China's edition. Common physicians mainly rely on word-of-mouth and textbook information for learning; hopefully we can read the latest updates on the internet.

Dr. Jin, The No. 1 Hospital of Qinhuangdao



My reason for attending the meeting is to further understand the NCCN Guidelines, discuss problems encountered during clinical practice with experts and learn new information.

Dr. Chen, 307 Hospital of PLA



The meeting atmosphere is nice and comfortable; I hope to participate in these meetings often. The contents are very helpful to clinical practice; we can explore treatment standards of kidney cancer with core experts from major hospitals. The Kidney Cancer Guidelines has only been developed in recent years and frequent interaction can facilitate changes in treatment conventions in the country. Also the constant updates to the guidelines can improve treatment for each individual disease.

Dr. Chen, Xinjiang Cancer Hospital



I generally follow the NCCN Guidelines. Hopefully the contents of this symposium can be seen by more community physicians in text or multimedia format.