

3RD INTERNATIONAL LYMPHOEDEMA FRAMEWORK CONFERENCE TORONTO, CANADA

I had the privilege of attending the 3rd International Lymphoedema Framework (ILF) Conference in Toronto, ON from June 16 to 18, 2011. Over 30 sessions were held with experts from around the world sharing their expertise related to research and/or the latest developments in the field lymphedema treatment and management.

The conference opened with Professor Christine Moffat's report of updates to the Best Practices for Lymphedema document. The updates are being done with a review of the document in collaboration with the American Lymphedema Framework Project. The Best Practices 2 document will be published in 2012 with plans to publish the Best Practices 3 document in 2017 in an effort to provide the most current information related to lymphoedema management.

Plenary sessions included the challenges of managing obesity and lymphedema. Professor Neil Piller from the Flinders University Medical Center in Australia spoke about the use of diagnostic tools such as perometry, bio-impedance and tonometry to determine tissue changes and as the basis of a diagnosis. Research presentations related to the psychosocial aspects of lymphoedema including lymphoedema management from the breast cancer survivor's perspective were presented by Dr. Roanne Thomas-McLean from the University of Saskatchewan and Dr. Mei Fu from the NYU Cancer Institute. The plenary session, "ILF Lymphoedema Dataset" addressed the goal of the ILF to find a process by which countries could collect information about lymphedema treatment and management in a consistent manner and, thereby, providing more accurate research results. Speakers from the UK, Japan, and the U.S. shared their experiences and goals related to the concept and design of the Minimum Dataset with electronic data collection. Another goal of the ILF is the standardization globally of the terminology related to lymphoedema.

Other plenary sessions included 'Children and Lymphoedema', 'Focus on Global Issues', 'Infection and Lymphoedema' and information from research related to primary lymphedema.

Dr. P. Brantus gave a very interesting presentation about the Handicap International project in Madagascar and the Global Programme to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (LF). The WHO strategy for managing lymphoedema is based on rigorous skin hygiene, exercise, elevation of the limb, and adapted footwear. The object of the presentation was to address the effectiveness of home-based lymphoedema management implemented by the national health system and Handicap International through a study carried out in 2009.

Dr. A. Guruprasad from India's Institute of Applied Dermatology presented a study of treatment of lymphoedema using western and traditional approaches (i.e. yoga, yoga breathing, and ayurveda). Many of the patients involved in the study had to travel long distances to clinics and came from impoverished areas. This program was largely focused on the instruction of patients and family members in the ongoing management of lymphoedema. I found Dr. Gurusprasad's presentation to be the most fascinating and uplifting one of all.

New developments in compression were shared. 3M has just completed a study with the ILF using Coban 2 that looks promising. Martina Reddick from St. John's, Newfoundland is a coordinator of a lymphedema program and she saw great results while involved in the research project. Dr. H. Partsch of Austria provided an overview of compression and its effects on lymphoedema and chronic oedema management.

One could not possibly attend all of the sessions that were running concurrently. I had the good fortune to attend Dorit Tidbar's presentation on implementing the Best Practices guidelines in a clinical setting for each patient individually based on the lymphedema assessment. I attended sessions related to special bandaging techniques and Dr. Anna Tower's presentation on lymphedema treatment in Palliative Care.

So much information!! So much promise of new developments in lymphoedema treatment and management!!

Next year's conference:

Montpellier, France
June 28-30, 2012

For more information on the conference visit the International Lymphoedema Framework website at: www.lympho.org.

Respectfully submitted,
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