

2018 LAS Education Symposium Overview

The 2018 Lymphedema Association of Saskatchewan (LAS) Education Symposium, Lymphedema and Lipedema Diagnosis, Management and Care Symposium, was held in Regina on September 6 and 7, 2018 at the Double Tree by Hilton Hotel and Conference Centre. The Symposium was a huge success and the largest LAS education event to date, with 170 people attending including health care professionals, those affected by lymphedema and lipedema and their caregivers, vendors, and world renown speakers. Prior to the symposium, various media outlets including Global and CTV Morning programs, CBC Radio One and the Leader Post provided great awareness through interviews about the Symposium and what it is like living with Lymphedema and Lipedema through personal stories of people with Primary and Secondary Lymphedema and Lipedema. The interviews can be viewed on the LAS website www.sasklymph.ca.

Thursday, September 6th featured pre-symposium compression workshops with BSN Medical, Valco/Medi, Lymphedema Depot and Paradigm Medical Inc. Over 50 health care providers from all over Saskatchewan and Western Canada became certified through these various compression vendors for compression measurement and fitting. Thursday evening Wine and cheese event featured a special presentation by Dr. Keast, The Swollen Leg: A Diagnostic and Therapeutic Challenge, provided an excellent overview of assessment and diagnosis of lower leg edema and was attended by over 62 various health care professionals.

Friday, September 7th provided a full day of excellent presentations for both health care professionals and patients/caregivers. Tracy Gardikiotis, The 2018 LAS Symposium Chairperson and Master of Ceremonies, provided welcoming remarks and a thank you to everyone involved in the event followed by welcome greetings from Councillor Sharon Bryce on behalf of the Honourable Mayor Fougere, LAS President Kelly Lloyd and Anna Kennedy, Executive Director of the Canadian Lymphedema Framework (CLF).

Dr. Rockson presented a very informative and exciting presentation on research for possible future treatments for lymphedema including drug therapy (an anti-inflammatory drug) and MicroBridge Implanatiion (the development of new lymphatic vessels in damaged or impaired areas) which he anticipates will be available in the next five years.

Dr. Keast presented an excellent overview of LIMPRINT, an international study on the prevalence and incidence of lymphedema, which has identified that over 1 million people in Canada are affected by Lymphedema including 30% of cases being cancer-related and 70% being non-cancer related and provided a second presentation that helped to distinguish between chronic edema vs lymphedema.

Dr. Granzow presented a very informative and detailed presentation on the three main surgical techniques for lymphedema and lipedema including: Vascularized Lymph Node Transfer (VLNT), Lymphaticovenous Anastomosis (LVA) and Suction Assisted Protein Lipectomy (SALP). He explained that it is very important to complete full lymphedema CDT treatment prior to surgery, that surgical treatment may include a combination of these procedures and that surgery options can improve the overall quality of life for patients for those that are appropriate for surgery.

Anna Kennedy presented an excellent overview of the work and initiatives that the CLF is doing on both a national and international level and the resources available from the CLF for both patients and health care providers.

These presentations were followed by a Physician Question and Answer Panel which was well received and offered the opportunity for the attendees to ask a number of specific questions and provided very detailed responses from the physicians.

The day finished with an update of lymphedema initiatives provided in Saskatchewan. Michelle Fischer from Healthline 811 presented a detailed presentation on the Breast Cancer Lymphedema Pilot Project, which provides a phone call and screening tool for breast cancer patients in Southern Saskatchewan shortly after surgery to provide assessment, information and support. Pamela Bryce and Sonja Orban from the Ministry of Health provided a very informative session on the current Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living (SAIL) compression and pump program and what patients are eligible for. A link to the SAIL policies can be found on www.sasklymph.ca

Concurrent patient and caregiver sessions were held throughout the day on self-management tools for those living with lymphedema and lipedema. The patient concurrent sessions were very informational and provided a vast amount of knowledge in treating and controlling Lymphedema and lipedema. John Mulligan from Lymphedema Depot provided a great presentation on the various types compression options available for treatment of lymphedema and lipedema and the necessity to have the right tools to managing these diseases. A copy of John's presentation can be found on www.sasklymph.ca Jenna Lieb and Sara Garden also provided a great presentation on exercise options including urban poling and yoga as valuable tools to help control these disorders.

The event also featured a trade show of various compression vendors and community services that provided information on all the latest compression products and programs available to help manage lymphedema and lipedema. The LAS booth provided a large amount of information and brochures for attendees and included the purchase of memberships at half-price and the Lymphedema and Lipedema Nutritional Guide book. We must say a special thanks to Lori Toursher, who made and donated the beautiful quilt and also all the donors that provided gifts that donated raffle prizes which profits went towards costs incurred for the symposium.

LAS has received very positive feedback on the Symposium from attendees and speakers regarding the organization of the event, the quality of the speakers and presentations and the overall networking opportunities for both health professionals and patients. Many felt that they gained a lot of new information, knowledge and support for these conditions and that the atmosphere at the event was very exciting, positive and hopeful for the future. LAS will continue to strive to improve the overall education and support of these conditions in future events and initiatives.

LAS would like to thank a number of people and organizations involved in the 2018 LAS Education Symposium including Tracy Gardikiotis and the 2018 Planning Committee, the event sponsors including our Gold Sponsors BSN Medical and Valco/Medi, the workshop and keynote speakers, and all the volunteers who donated their time and effort to make this such an outstanding event.