

# Canadian Lung Cancer Conference 2017

N. Chooback MD,\* B. Melosky MD,\* and C. Ho MD\*

## ABSTRACT

The 2017 Canadian Lung Cancer Conference was held 9–10 February in Vancouver, British Columbia. Each year at this prestigious event, hundreds of professionals involved in lung cancer care come together to discuss new research, to learn about recent developments, and to collaborate and network with colleagues from across the country. This year's meeting featured highly anticipated sessions, including resident education, multidisciplinary breakout sessions, debates, and an immuno-oncology symposium.

**Key Words** Canadian Lung Cancer Conference, CLCCO, meetings

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## INTRODUCTION

When the first-ever Western Canadian Lung Conference, chaired by Dr. Charlie Butts, was held in Kelowna 17 years ago, it had a small audience of medical oncologists drawn mainly from the West Coast. Very quickly, however, the meeting transformed into a national symposium at which individuals involved in all aspects of lung cancer care across Canada meet and discuss the latest advances in research and the implications for practice nationwide. Now known as the Canadian Lung Cancer Conference (CLCCO), chaired by Drs. Barbara Melosky and Cheryl Ho, the meeting is held annually in Vancouver, British Columbia, and its audience comprises more than 350 lung cancer clinicians, researchers, trainees, and industry representatives from across the country. In 2017, the CLCCO was held 9–10 February. It opened with an impressively attended welcome dinner that featured *Dragon's Den*-style presentations and, fittingly, demonstrated the collegial and multidisciplinary qualities that have allowed the meeting to be successful over its many years of existence.

The main objective of the CLCCO is to improve the care of lung cancer patients in Canada by keeping attendees up to date on the latest medical, surgical, radiation, and nursing oncology data available and by providing education and practice guidance to clinicians. The meeting is therefore organized into several highly anticipated sessions that revolve around those themes.

## SESSIONS

### Canadian Oncology Resident Education Session

The Canadian Oncology Resident Education session, held on the first day of the conference, focused on providing

education for trainees from across the country interested in lung cancer. This year, the medical oncology breakout session included an overview of lung cancer management by Dr. Ross Camidge, an overview of cancer genomics by Dr. Shantanu Banerji, a crash course on statistics and clinical trial design by Dr. Mary Redman, and an in-depth look into the oncology drug approval process in Canada by Dr. Anil Abraham Joy. The radiation oncology breakout session focused on the treatment of brain metastases and stereotactic radiotherapy.

### Breakfast Symposium

Titled "What i-o really means for your NSCLC patient," the breakfast symposium provided an overview of the impact of immuno-oncology (i-o) in the treatment of lung cancer patients. Ms. Christina Sit from Lung Cancer Canada presented patient testimonials about improvements in quality of life with i-o and the relative tolerability of the treatments. Dr. Solange Peters then spoke about the way in which i-o data have transformed clinical practice and posed questions about the importance of patient selection, the value of PD-L1 testing, duration of therapy, and the role of i-o combinations in the first-line treatment of non-small-cell lung cancer.

### Canadian Cancer Trials Group

Canadian Cancer Trials Group was once again represented by Dr. Glenwood Goss, who provided a comprehensive overview of currently accruing trials as well those planned for activation in the near future, all along urging attendees to help enrol patients and contribute to the advancement of lung cancer research in Canada. He specifically spoke about BR.34, a randomized trial of durvalumab and tremelimumab with or without platinum-based chemotherapy

in patients with metastatic non-small-cell lung cancer. Goss credited the members of the Canadian Cancer Trials Group from across the country for the continued success of the group.

### Multidisciplinary Sessions

In the morning session of the meeting, each discipline presented highlights from recent developments in medical, radiation, and surgical oncology and in respiratory. Dr. Ross Camidge's presentation "Lung cancer: today and tomorrow" focused on the emergence of new oncogenic drivers and the coexistence of personalized medicine and immunotherapy, and the implications of those approaches for future trial design and clinical practice. Dr. Natasha Leighl provided a sobering Canadian perspective by discussing the difficulty of achieving adequate testing and of facilitating drug access as the growth in personalized cancer care continues. She emphasized that, although genomic tests and new drugs go through the required approval pipelines in Canada, the main options for patients who want to obtain new treatments are clinical trials, expanded access programs, and self-pay.

Dr. Morten Hoyer talked about the role of stereotactic body radiation therapy in early-stage lung cancer and its emergence as an alternative to surgery in both fit and unfit patients. Dr. Houda Bahig went on to discuss the more practical challenges of stereotactic ablative body radiation in patients both with central or ultra-central tumours and with underlying interstitial lung disease. She also indicated that local consolidative treatments might have a role in specific subgroups of patients with oligometastatic non-small-cell lung cancer, as demonstrated by an improvement in progression-free survival and possibly overall survival.

The morning session ended with Drs. Felix Herth and Sebastien Gilbert impressing the audience with the latest advances in interventional pulmonology and thoracic surgery. Virtual bronchoscopic navigation is a research tool used by Herth's group to obtain transparenchymal nodule access to small lesions lacking bronchial access. Gilbert demonstrated the performance of uniportal pulmonary resections that help to minimize chest wall trauma and, potentially, patient recovery times and complication rates.

### Breakout Sessions

The afternoon portion of the meeting featured breakout sessions in medical oncology, radiation oncology, and nursing. Dr. Anand Swaminath from radiation oncology focused on quality control in radiation treatment with the help of peer review, and Dr. Martin Chasen emphasized the role of cancer rehabilitation and the benefits of a multimodal palliative rehabilitation program for patients with advanced cancer.

In the medical oncology breakout session, one of the most exciting recent developments in lung cancer was discussed by Drs. Brandon Sheffield and Jeffrey Rothenstein. They provided a very informative and comprehensive background overview of *MET* exon 14 skipping mutations and their susceptibility to targeted therapy.

### Debates

Perhaps the most highly anticipated part of CLCCO is the debate session. This year, the debaters did not disappoint; they provided the audience with an exciting presentation of varying views on controversial oncology topics. Dr. Rosalyn Juergens, arguing against performing biopsies for T790M resistance treatment with osimertinib in *EGFR* mutation-positive patients, succeeded over Dr. Scott Laurie, despite his enthusiastic presentation. Dr. Normand Blais, a long-time veteran of the CLCCO debates, channelled his excellent debating skills for a triumphant win over Dr. Charlie Butts, arguing for immunotherapy plus chemotherapy rather than combination immunotherapy. In the final debate, Drs. Patrick Cheung and Howard Lau respectively argued for high-dose compared with palliative-dose radiation in a patient with stage IIIb disease. After some technical misadventures, their debate ended in a tie.

### Awards

Dr. Stephen Lam and the Betty Rice family presented Dr. Charles Lim with the Betty Rice Award, and Betty Rice's daughter delivered a touching and at times tearful speech about her mother and the ongoing involvement of their family in supporting lung cancer research.

The presentation of the Lifetime Achievement Award to Dr. Nevin Murray by meeting chair Dr. Cheryl Ho provided a heartwarming and bittersweet finale to this year's CLCCO meeting. In his thank-you speech, Murray spoke of his involvement in the early days of lung cancer treatment in Canada and reminded the audience that although much has changed during the last few decades, many more exciting changes await in the future for the next generation of lung cancer clinicians and researchers.

### SUMMARY

This year brought the 17th annual CLCCO, and having attracted more than 350 attendees from a wide range of disciplines, the meeting organizers succeeded in making yet another lasting mark in the history of lung cancer care in Canada. The CLCCO provides a national platform for Canadian leaders in lung cancer to present their latest research, to collaborate and network with colleagues, and to discover practice-changing information that will help them take better care of their patients. The conference is also an excellent venue for trainees, who can learn how to become involved in lung cancer research and to make a difference into the future. Next year's meeting is already highly anticipated and promises to continue maintaining this great legacy.

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES

We have read and understood *Current Oncology's* policy on disclosing conflicts of interest, and we declare that we have none.

### AUTHOR AFFILIATIONS

\*Department of Medical Oncology, BC Cancer Agency, Vancouver, BC.