



Eleanor Quan, M.D.

- **Hematology/Oncology Training at UCI Medical Center, Orange**
- **Offices: Long Beach and Huntington Beach**

My mother's helping attitude has shaped my personality deeply. I have become very compassionate about life and helping people comes natural to me. Patients are referred to me because of serious problems, such as a malignancy or blood disease. On a daily basis, I have committed myself to carrying out, without restriction and fully, any and all duties and responsibilities of a physician.

PSMG: *What lessons have you learned from your PSMG colleagues?*

Dr. Quan: I have learned that I belong to a team and appreciate very much the support that I get from my colleagues at PSMG. I have come to the realization that I could never do what I do alone, and I will forever need the help of my colleagues and staff and the whole team to get me through the day. I cherish the helpful discussions and opinions that I receive from my colleagues all the time, especially on difficult cases.

PSMG: *What is your most memorable experience?*

Dr. Quan: I have had many memorable experiences with my patients. I have seen joy and laughter when my patients overcome their cancer. I have seen relief and peace when a patient and family decide to focus their attention on comfort and quality of life at the end of life. I have been humbled by the trust bestowed on me and I know I cannot let my patients down. I feel that I have to go on and do my best for my patients no matter how drained I am at the end of the day.

PSMG: *Describe your experiences teaching interns and residents and new doctors about the practice of medicine.*

Dr. Schreiber: I was never formally trained as a teacher, so when asked to participate as a clinical instructor in the hematology/oncology program at the Long Beach VA Hospital, I was not sure what it took to be a teacher. To my astonishment, I soon discovered that I was learning more than I thought I was teaching. To this day I am thankful for the opportunity that was given to me.

PSMG: *How do you care for patients and families when they are faced with acute problems such as pain, anxiety, insomnia, nausea and fatigue?*

Dr. Schreiber: The symptoms of a disease can sometimes be overwhelming. I sit down with the patient and family and slowly go over the possible events that are likely to occur due to the disease and due to the therapy. I will repeat this a second time since many patients and family members tend to block out a good deal of the information because of its serious and frightening implications. Anticipating all possible complications, of course, is usually impossible and so I do advise that unusual problems can happen. Listening to the patient's complaints is to me the most important deterrent in preventing serious escalation of complications. I never make light of any symptom or complaint and never tell the patient "it's nothing." Finally, I try to avoid the use of medical terms; they tend to confuse and many times mislead patients.

PSMG: *Often times you are on call seeing patients in the hospital. What is the number one challenge for you when dealing with acute issues in the hospital?*

Dr. Schreiber: When I need to care for a patient who is acutely ill, stabilization of the patient, getting familiar with patient's history and available data, mobilization of other health care providers, such as other consultants and nurses in an urgent way, is the key for a favorable outcome. I am well prepared for such emergencies before the weekend begins. Every Friday afternoon I meet with my colleagues from PSMG to discuss the patients I will be seeing on Saturday and Sunday. This provides me with the most pertinent data and alerts me to any potential problems. Finally, it is important to advise the family of any significant change in the patient's condition.



Lihong Wu, M.D.

- **Hematology/Oncology Training at New York Medical College, New York**
- **Offices: Long Beach and Los Alamitos**

PSMG: *What are the most important things you have learned from your colleagues and staff at PSMG?*

Dr. Wu: I have to say that Dr. T is a great mentor. He cares for his patients with tremendous compassion. His great knowledge of oncology and internal medicine helps all of us including physicians and nurses. I am learning a lot from him. There is a common thread amongst all my colleagues at PSMG: they all treat and comfort their patients with passion. I sense that all gets better with Dr. T's influence.

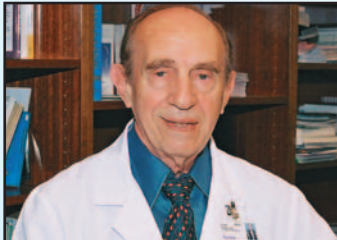
PSMG: *Symptoms, like pain or nausea, are such a problem....*

How do you comfort your patients?

Dr. Quan: Symptom management is of utmost importance to me and I believe it should be to any good physician. I give each one of my patients my full attention, support and care. I listen very attentively and patiently, so that I understand their problems correctly. I then focus on symptoms such as anxiety, depression, insomnia, pain, nausea, fatigue, breathlessness, diarrhea, or constipation and a variety of other emotional or physical concerns. Fortunately, we can do a lot now about these problems so we make our patients comfortable. The quality of life of our patients is very important to us.

PSMG: *What shaped you the most in becoming a physician?*

Dr. Quan: Our parents cast a life-long shadow on the way we live our lives. I grew up in a large family which included many siblings and an extended family. Ever since I can remember, and to this day, I have watched my mother help many people, even those she hardly knew.



Walter Schreiber, M.D.

- **Hematology/Oncology Training at Long Beach VA Hospital, Long Beach**
- **Hospitalist**



Simon Tchekmedyian, M.D.

- **Hematology/Oncology Training at University of Maryland Cancer Center, Baltimore**
- **Offices: Long Beach, Los Alamitos and Huntington Beach**

PSMG: *What advice do you give to a new doctor?*

Dr. T: After reviewing all available medical information about the patient, go in, introduce yourself, close the door, sit down, look at the patient straight in the eye, ask appropriate questions, and listen. An old professor once told me the best tool a doctor can use is a chair. Explore the patient's illness and problems from the very beginning and try to understand not only the disease course, but also the patient as a person. Review all existing records critically, do read the fine print. Examine the patient

thoroughly and think carefully before ordering tests or invasive procedures. Always think what impact anything you order will have on the well-being of the patient. Always consult with the patient and your colleagues and, where appropriate, with family, friends, and others around the patient to determine what best suits the patient's needs. The patient and the family will give you important clues. Keep your antennas up so you pick up problems and anticipate future complications. Keep the patient and the family informed in plain terms about what is going on, and what your plans are. We must genuinely care for the patient's well-being and do everything in our power for them. Patients and their families can tell if you really care, and they appreciate it if you do. Don't take anything for granted. Just follow-up and follow-through, and make sure that the intended treatment is being delivered and monitored tightly. Be humble and down to earth; be ready to accept the harsh realities in the day-to-day practice of medicine. A doctor may suffer tremendously, almost unbearably, when a patient does not do well. The doctor will learn from each experience. We are all learning every day. Patients and their families have taught me many lessons. Over the years, they have shown great strength, grace, kindness, humor, and good common sense. One last bit of advice to new doctors is to be prepared for their new teachers: patients and their families.

PSMG: *What do you look for in new doctors?*

Dr. T: I focus not only on their training and base of medical knowledge, which has to be excellent, but also on their character, their compassion, and their



DOCTORS ARE IN

Questions & Answers

Our Physicians Practice at the Following Hospitals

Glendale Memorial Medical Center, Glendale, California
Glendale Adventist Medical Center, Glendale, California
Hoag Hospital and Medical Center, Newport Beach, California
Long Beach Memorial Medical Center, Long Beach, California

Los Alamitos Medical Center, Los Alamitos, California
Orange Coast Memorial Medical Center, Fountain Valley, California
St. Mary Medical Center, Long Beach, California
Verdugo Hills Hospital, Glendale, California

humanity. Above all, I want the doctors to care. They need to sincerely and genuinely have the patient's best interests at heart, and give everything they've got to help the patient. When it comes to taking care of our patients, we must do what it takes.

PSMG: *So what do you think the future of cancer treatment is?*

Dr. T: We are moving away from non-specific, general treatments with high-levels of toxicity to more specific and less toxic treatments that target only the cancer cells. We are learning rapidly about the switches that turn on and off the cancer cells, we are learning what makes them divide and spread and what makes them die. The advance in new therapies for cancer is developing in many fronts and is encroaching on many cancer types. We now have many different options to reach better treatments or a cure. As described in this publication, these include not only the angiogenesis inhibitors and monoclonal antibodies, but also oral medications that are easy to take with few side effects such as Iressa®, approved for lung cancer, and Gleevec®, approved for chronic myelogenous leukemia. Derivatives of the drug thalidomide show promise in the treatment of multiple myeloma. Many different molecules that inhibit certain enzymes or pathways vital to cancer growth are in active development and testing. We are very fortunate to be able to offer our patients many of these innovative cutting edge programs through our extensive clinical trials program.



Kalust Ucar, M.D.

- **Hematology/Oncology Training at UCLA School of Medicine, Los Angeles**
- **Office: Glendale**

PSMG: *What are you most proud of as a Medical Director of PSMG?*

Dr. Ucar: Since I joined Dr. T and PSMG in 1996, the number of patients we care for, the number of clinical research trials we contribute to, size of our team and the scope of our practice have increased greatly. We have achieved these goals without compromising our approach and commitment to patient care, research and teaching the doctors of the future. The pledge set by Dr. T, "that we will do what it takes" to make our patients better has been embraced by each and all who have joined PSMG.

PSMG: *How do you think we will be treating cancer in the year 2014?*

Dr. Ucar: We will have less toxic, more specific and effective drugs. But we will continue to use hard work, compassion, and attention to detail. We will still go the extra mile, trying our best for each of our patients, always keeping up to date, and making new treatments available for our patients through clinical trials. In 2014, we will have a better understanding of the genetics of cancer cells and better treatments. As we strive to prolong life, we also need to keep the hope that new treatments will arrive and help soon.

PSMG: *Will chemotherapy remain important or will it all be targeted therapy?*

Dr. Ucar: Targeted therapies are treatments that work on specific molecular abnormalities which are critical to cancer development and progression. In some aspects, chemotherapy can also be targeted as it hits specific targets. We will probably move to treatments that are very specific and spare normal tissues.

PSMG: *Tell us about a memorable patient experience?*

Dr. Ucar: I remember meeting a patient just diagnosed with two cancers at the same time; throat and lung cancer at the age of 70. Patient and family agreed to an aggressive treatment plan. Soon after the first treatment he ended up in the ER with severe mouth sores, fever, infection, diarrhea and dehydration; it was of course, 8 PM on a Friday when I met him in the ER. I could sense a hint of mistrust as he was quite uncomfortable. "What are you doing here, working so late on a Friday?" he asked me. "Since I am the one who made you so sick, don't you think I should be here to take care of things?" I said. His relief and trust in my care was visible. He knew I'd be there for him that night and any other time in the future.

PSMG: *The most important things you have learned from your colleagues at PSMG?*

Dr. Liem: I have learned to listen to, respect, care for, and learn from the patient. We focus on taking care of the whole patient, not only the disease.

PSMG: *What is your advice to the physicians who have recently joined the PSMG team?*

Dr. Liem: Listen to the patient. Address their needs and concerns. Build a relationship based on mutual trust.

PSMG: *How important is symptom management and quality of life for your patients?*

Dr. Liem: Many times we can cure a patient; sometimes we cannot. In either case, improving the patient's symptoms is a top priority. We focus on pain, nausea, fatigue and other complaints patients have. PSMG has been a major research center for many years in developing better treatments for symptom management and quality of life.

In general, patients tolerate their treatment better with adequate symptom control. Symptom control not only improves the quality of life, but it may even impact on the efficacy of the treatment. Patients are likely to adhere to and be able to complete treatments if they are comfortable and free of acute uncomfortable symptoms.

PSMG: *What was your role in the clinical trial with Iressa?*

Dr. Liem: Approximately 170,000 lung cancer patients will be diagnosed in 2003 and only 10% will be cured. We are part of a massive effort to improve this discouraging ratio. Chemotherapy treatments delivered after surgery in patients with lung cancer have been shown to improve results.

Recently, the FDA approved gefitinib (Iressa®), a new drug to treat lung cancer. This pill works very differently from chemotherapy. It inhibits an enzyme that is involved with lung cancer cell growth. For two years, before it was approved by the FDA, Iressa® was available at Pacific Shores Medical Group through a clinical trial (An Expanded Access Clinical Program with ZD1839 (Iressa®) for Patients with Advanced Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer). Over 150 patients with lung cancer who were no longer helped by chemotherapy or those who were too weak to receive chemotherapy, were able to receive Iressa® at PSMG. Although not a cure for lung cancer, Iressa® sometimes showed remarkable results.



André K.D. Liem, M.D.

- **Hematology/Oncology Training at UCI Medical Center, Orange**
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Amy Wang, M.D., Ph.D.

- **Hematology/Oncology Training at Boston University School of Medicine, Boston**
- **Office: Long Beach**

PSMG: *How did your experience pursuing a Ph.D. in addition to M.D. shape you as a physician?*

Dr. Wang: An illness such as cancer and its symptoms are only the visible end results of a very complex and long set of events, like the leaves on a tree. I seek to understand the origins of cancer, the roots and the soil that produce the leaves, in order to unlock some of the mysteries and find new treatments. Pursuing a Ph.D. provided me with a better understanding of the new immune and targeted therapies we use in our daily practices at PSMG.

PSMG: *What is the most important thing you learned during your oncology training at Boston University School of Medicine?*

Dr. Wang: They taught me to give patients the best care available. I learned how to communicate with patients and families, how to be honest and compassionate at the same time.

PSMG: *What have you learned from your colleagues at PSMG?*

Dr. Wang: Delivery of medical care at PSMG demands utmost focus and attention to detail; we seek perfection. Working in an environment

that supports my vocation is very satisfying to me. PSMG is an ideal place to continue to advance in my profession as a physician and researcher.

PSMG: *What made you decide to specialize in hematology/oncology?*

Dr. Wang: When I was in medical school, two of my closest childhood friends died from cancer at the hospital where I worked. I was very sad, and at that moment in time I made up my mind that I would do everything I could to help cancer patients and contribute as a physician and scientist to help find cures.

PSMG: *The most important lesson you learned from your teachers at USC Norris?*

Dr. Burtzo: I have had many excellent teachers at USC but the one that stands out would be Dr. Alexandra Levine. She had enormous responsibilities as the head of Hematology at USC in all aspects of research, administration, as well as patient care. Despite all of the demands on her when she was with a patient, she would always take the time to sit them down, look them eye to eye and speak with them to understand their needs. It is an amazing talent to put all other concerns aside and focus on that one important person in front of you. I could see the way her patients appreciated her attention, and the dramatic impact it had on their care and outcome. She taught me to remember that every person counts and who all this work is really for.

PSMG: *The most important thing you have learned from your colleagues at PSMG?*

Dr. Burtzo: I have seen such camaraderie among the physicians, nurses, research and clerical staff at Pacific Shores that I see daily what the phrase "there is no I in the word TEAM" really means. Things happen with such efficiency in our group, teaching me that the sometimes seemingly impossible task of fighting cancer is possible when people work together for a common goal.

PSMG: *What does it take for you to ensure that you are providing the very best care to your patients?*

Dr. Burtzo: To ensure that I am offering "the best" care to my patients I always ask myself if the care I am offering is the same care I would offer to a member of my own family. I believe the best care is not only the management backed by the best track record of experience and research data, but also care offered with a bond of friendship. I know I am offering the best care when a patient leaves my office knowing they have both a physician and a friend who is a cancer specialist as well.

PSMG: *What are some of your most memorable experiences?*

Dr. Burtzo: Everyday seems like a new collection of memorable experiences to me and that is one of the things I love about this field. My most memorable experiences are the ones in which I was successful in relieving some of the uncertainty that often comes with a diagnosis of cancer and have helped my patients regain a sense of understanding and control over what happens in their lives.



David Burtzo, M.D.

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