Preventative Care in Clinical Practice

Geriatrics & Aging’s mandate is to provide education about the health concerns of older adults to doctors in Canada and throughout the world (although other health care practitioners also find the journal useful). However, we all learn in different ways, and G&A has long acknowledged this by having an innovative web site and, more recently, by incorporating accredited continuing medical education modules in our journal and website.

I was thrilled to be part of yet another new educational endeavour sponsored by Geriatrics & Aging on the evening of February 8, 2006. This was a live, interactive, web-based educational event. The topics of discussion were the use of cholinesterase inhibitors (starting and switching) and the controversies surrounding atypical antipsychotic use in older patients with dementia (please access recording by logging on to http://cme.geriatric-sandaging.ca/p45673593/). I moderated, and we had an all-star panel. Morris Freedman is a behavioural neurologist, and is the head of behavioural neurology at the University of Toronto and the head of neurology at Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care. Sandra Black, a renowned scientist and clinician also in the field of behavioural neurology, is the head of neurology at Sunnybrook & Women’s in Toronto. David Conn is the head of geriatric psychiatry at Baycrest and one of the driving forces in the national coalition for senior’s mental health. Despite this awesome assemblage of clinical knowledge on the panel, the true stars of the evening were the audience who challenged the panel with difficult questions and even provided some of the answers! Particular thanks to the G&A staff for making this happen: James Schultz, Regina Starr, Mark Varnovitski, and Gennady Kucheruk. Thanks as well to our publisher, Michael Yasny, for his tremendous support.

We also have a great educational issue for you this month, focussed on prevention. Our CME focus is on “Cancer Screening” by our senior editor Shabbir Alibhai, who is fast becoming an international authority on the topic of cancer in older adults. “Screening for and Prescribing Exercise for Older Adults” is contributed by Dr. Marian Garfinkel. Falls are one of the most important issues our society faces. The closely related article “Yoga as a Complementary Therapy” is contributed by Dr. Marian Garfinkel. Falls are one of the most important issues facing older adults and the topic of “Ophthalmic Interventions to Help Prevent Falls” is written by Drs. John G. Buckley and David B. Elliott. Our final screening/prevention article, “Should Older People Be Regularly Screened for Vision and Hearing by Primary Health Care Providers?” is by Drs. Jie Jin Wang, Jennifer L. Smith, and Stephen R. Leeder.

We also have our usual collection of articles on other diverse topics. There is “Multiple System Atrophy: An Update” by Drs. Felix Geser and Gregor K. Wenning, and a critically important drug article, “Medication Review for Older Adults,” by Drs. Richard Holland and David Wright. There are numerous drugs that are started for appropriate reasons that are continued even if not effective or when circumstances change. I am particularly pleased to see the article on “Cardiac Rehabilitation in the Older Population” by Dr. Terence Kavanagh. Dr. Kavanagh virtually invented the field of cardiac rehabilitation and is one of Canada’s most distinguished medical practitioners.

Enjoy this issue.

Barry Goldlist