

September 2025 | ISSUE #47

Patient and Family Advisory Council

Cuthbert Lab & Oncology Outcomes

Welcome

Welcome to our new and returning PFAC members for another exciting academic year! We are thrilled to have the PFAC team growing and look forward to connecting at our upcoming meeting in October. As there will be several new faces joining the call in October, we will spend a good portion of the meeting doing round table introductions, so that everyone has a chance to meet. After that, we will be sharing details about several grant applications that were recently submitted, on the topics of cancer and mental illness, cancer physician burnout, measuring complexity of cancer care, and tai-chi for cancer pain management. Finally, we will be sharing information for a handful of new projects we have in the works and are keen to receive feedback about.

You're Invited!
RWE O2 DAY
Real-World Evidence in Oncology Outcomes (RWE O2) Day
NOVEMBER 19, 2025
The Bow Tower - 500 Centre St S, Calgary, AB T2G 0E3

In partnership with the 2025 POET Congress, this dynamic half-day event will bring together healthcare professionals from across Alberta to connect, learn, and shape the future of oncology care. RWE O2 Day is all about collaboration, cutting-edge data, and bold ideas. Through engaging presentations, thought-provoking panel discussions, and valuable networking opportunities, we'll explore how real-world evidence is transforming clinical practice, informing policy, and driving innovation in cancer care.

Registration is FREE for the half day event!

[Click here](#) to secure your spot today.

In this Issue

Welcome

Research Highlights

Study Recruitment

Coming Up

Research Highlights

Oncology Outcomes

Effectiveness of Immune Checkpoint Inhibitor with Anti-PD-1 Monotherapy or in Combination with Ipilimumab in Younger versus Older Adults with Advanced Melanoma.

STUDY PURPOSE

The majority of melanoma is diagnosed in older adults, between 55 and 84 years old.

Melanoma manifests differently in older adults.

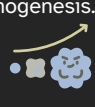
Effects of Treatment.

Toxicity Tolerance.

Host Immune Function.

Tumor Biology.

Molecular Pathogenesis.



Still, melanoma in older adults is underrepresented in clinical trials.

Conducted a retrospective multi-center cohort study to understand the potential effects of age on treatment outcomes in advanced melanoma after receiving immune checkpoint inhibitors (ICI).

CONCLUSIONS & FUTURE IMPACT

OVERALL, superior survival is observed in younger patients (under 65 years of age).

This may be due to higher utilization of combination ICI in younger patients.

When receiving the same treatment (anti-PD-1 monotherapy), older patients had similar survival outcomes as younger patients.

Older patients may have superior tumor response to immunotherapy, whereas young patients may benefit from more aggressive ICI.

Studying the effect of age on melanoma treatment outcomes is important, as this knowledge can inform decision-making regarding patient treatment.

[Click here for full article.](#)

Cuthbert Lab

OUTCOMES AND HEALTHCARE UTILIZATION AMONG NEW PERSISTENT OPIOID USERS AND NONOPIOID USERS AFTER CURATIVE-INTENT SURGERY FOR CANCER

Na Lin, Eashita Dabas, May Lynn Quan, Winson Y Cheung, Colleen Cuthbert, Yuanchao Feng, Shiyong Kong, Khara M Sauro, Darren R Brenner, Lin Yang, Mingshan Lu, Yuan Xu

Purpose

The goal of this investigation was to compare and contrast **health outcomes** and **resource utilization** among cancer patients who became **new persistent opioid users** after curative-intent surgery, compared to those who did not use opioids.

Methods

Researchers analyzed data from **19,219 opioid-naïve adults** in **Alberta, Canada**, who underwent curative-intent surgery for solid cancers (2011–2015). Patients were followed until 2019, with key health outcomes including **opioid overdose (primary outcome)**, **mortality**, and **post surgery length of follow-up**. Healthcare/ resource utilization measures included **hospitalizations** and **emergency room visits**.

Results

- 8% of patients became new persistent opioid users post-surgery
- New persistent opioid user patients experienced a **higher rate of opioid overdose** within 3 years.
- They also had **higher rate of multiple hospitalizations and emergency room visit rates** in the first year.
- Association with higher overall & non-cancer mortality compared to nonopioid users.

Conclusions

Persistent opioid use following cancer surgery is associated with **increased overdose risk, worse survival, and greater healthcare utilization**. Further research is needed to explore whether reducing this risk can improve patient outcomes and ease medical resource strain.

Study #1

Study Recruitment



What is the study about?

Head and neck cancer (HNC) treatment is often associated with physical and psychosocial burdens. Your participation will be used to understand the views of participants when it comes to difficulties involved on social isolation and loneliness during HNC treatment

What is involved?

Participate in an interview (**approximately 60 minutes**) to share your thoughts and views on social isolation and loneliness during cancer treatment

Who is eligible?

Individuals diagnosed with HNC as an adult and had completed treatment for at least 1 year



This study has received ethics approval from the Health Research Ethics Board of Alberta HREBA.CC-24-0468
Contact us at laisrenata.cezariosa@ucalgary.ca to join!



Study #2

Join Our Research Study!

Sociodemographic and Psychosocial Patient and Physician Factors in Oncology Treatment Decision-Making

What?

We want to understand how the background, experiences, and personal beliefs of patients and physicians affect the way they make treatment decisions together AND how these decisions impact patient's health. Share your experiences in a focus group with us!

Who?

- 18 years old or over
- Received a cancer diagnosis within the past 2 years
- Living in Alberta
- Referred to a medical oncologist for a chemotherapy assessment



Contact us at cacuthbe@ucalgary.ca

This study has received ethics approval from the Health Research Ethics Board of Alberta (HREBA.CC-25-0065). Contact HREBA at 780-423-5727. This poster was created in accordance with the HREBA.CC-25-0065-Patient ICF_V1 documented on February 10, 2025.



Coming Up



The next meeting will be held on Thursday, October 2 from 4:00-5:30pm via zoom.

The next newsletter will release in October 2025.

Previous issues of the PFAC newsletter have been posted online:

<https://www.cuthbertlab.com/advisory-council>

Follow us on social media

[@cuthbert_lab](https://www.instagram.com/cuthbert_lab)



[@oncoutcomes](https://www.instagram.com/oncoutcomes)

[Cuthbert Lab](https://www.facebook.com/CuthbertLab)



[Oncology Outcomes](https://www.facebook.com/OncologyOutcomes)

[@Cuthbert_Lab](https://www.twitter.com/Cuthbert_Lab)



[@OncOutcomes](https://www.twitter.com/OncOutcomes)

