

# From our pages to your practice

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Editor-in-Chief

As we go to press with this issue, most of us in the United States are coming out of one of the most eventful winters in recent memory. The East Coast had more snow than the last 5 winters combined, whereas the West Coast had no rain with the drought approaching epic proportions. Meanwhile, the middle of the country experienced huge swings in temperature and weather from the polar vortex. Even the groundhog said the winter would be a long one, but, mercifully, it is just about to end.

To help buoy your spirits, we have some interesting and insightful articles lined up for you this month, beginning with a Commentary by Samuel and Stone on page 78 on treating HER2-positive breast cancer and asking whether the era of trastuzumab therapy is over. The Commentary and the Community Translations report on page 84 that it accompanies explore the use of pertuzumab and trastuzumab together, especially in the neoadjuvant setting. The Cleopatra trial has already shown that combining pertuzumab with trastuzumab plus docetaxel as a first-line treatment for HER2-positive metastatic breast cancer significantly prolonged progression-free survival with no increase in cardiac toxic effects, compared with placebo plus trastuzumab plus docetaxel, so perhaps using pertuzumab and trastuzumab upfront might be equally successful. From breast cancer we turn to the unusual but always challenging hairy cell leukemia and a review of current therapeutic options for this uncommon subtype of leukemia (p. 104). There used to be just one therapy option for hairy cell leukemia – splenectomy – but a better understanding of the disease’s pathophysiology has led to a choice of chemotherapy, immunotherapy, and biologic agents in addition to surgery as possible therapeutic options.

How many of you have an infusion center in a private practice setting with your own laboratory? Still many, I hope. If you do, though, you should read the Commentary on page 82 by Davis and colleagues about safety standards and in particular, the rules about bloodborne pathogen safety. The Office of Safety and Health Administration issued its Bloodborne Pathogen Standard in 1991 for the regulation of occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens, including HIV, hepatitis

B, and hepatitis C. That was followed by the Needlestick Safety and Prevention Act in 2000, which required employers to take additional steps to ensure the safety of their employees. The authors warn that the rules governing safety procedures in an office or infusion center setting are broader and stricter than they initially thought.

Shifting gears to supportive care, Lanni and colleagues present a How We Do It article on page 87 about the implementation of an exercise and wellness rehabilitation program at their institution to enhance the overall survivorship experience. The aim was to improve the quality of care that the patients received and to empower them through education and support to manage their health and wellness in the survivorship phase. How about pain and the treatment of breakthrough pain in cancer patients? Breakthrough pain is a common occurrence among our patients and although it varies quite substantially among individuals, it is fairly consistent and narrowly defined for a given patient. Filbet and colleagues (p. 99) analyzed the variability of breakthrough pain intensity in patients with cancer and suggest using a consistent maintenance dosage of analgesia for breakthrough pain once it has been titrated to an effective dose. On page 92, Mittman and colleagues examine the use and costs of end-of-life care for advanced colorectal cancer patients. The authors argue that a better understanding of the end-of-life home care experience and costs are crucial in informing decisions about future resource allocations.

We hope you enjoy this month’s issue. There were some important firsts for the journal last month: we launched our first digital edition and we sent out our first electronic table of contents, both featuring the line-up from the February issue. Watch out for these regular features going forward – they are dispatched in the second half of each month. Next on our agenda for embracing new and social media will be a presence in the Twitter sphere and on Facebook, and you’ll be able to find us there once we have completed the redesign for our Web site. In the meantime, you can visit our site at [jcso-online.com](http://jcso-online.com), where you’ll find the articles and my podcasts from the January and February issues.

