

British Oncology Pharmacy Association Symposium 2023

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The 26th British Oncology Pharmacy Association (BOPA) symposium, held from the 6th to 8th October 2023, saw pharmacists from the United Kingdom and Ireland travel to Newport, South Wales.

The BOPA symposium supplied some great insights on targeted therapies and advances in patient care. Leading experts showed case studies of their patients being managed with the most advanced cancers, through innovation in pharmaceutical treatments and developments in technology. Immunotherapy, targeted therapy, and CAR-T cell therapy are some of the latest innovations in cancer treatment which were discussed in the breakout sessions.

The ICC in Wales was a great setting for this annual symposium. The auditorium and meeting rooms are ultramodern, which allowed all delegates to comfortably access all the sessions. The pharmaceutical exhibition was a focal point for pharmacists and members of the pharmaceutical industry to interact and discuss the latest innovations in cancer treatments with exhibitors throughout the weekend.

"I was delighted to attend a fantastic event with informative symposium talks and breakout sessions, which was very well organised by the BOPA committee, thank you. It was discussed how cancer care is facing substantial challenges as health care professionals experience pressure to treat more patients and ensure their needs are met while also ensuring better outcomes. Collaboration aims to drive improved patient outcomes as health care professionals share experiences to improve efficiency & survival rates, reduce side effects and deal with new norms around sexuality, gender, and multiculturalism."

Rachel Wright – Product Manager, Fresenius Kabi Ireland



"The tone of the sessions was that of positivity as clinicians discussed the many new treatment options available to them in 2023. Many of these treatments have been developed in the last decade, which demonstrates how far we have come. Treatments such as Immunotherapy, CAR-T (Chimeric Antigen Receptor T) and TIL (Tumour-Infiltrating Lymphocytes) therapy are revolutionary in the area of cancer treatment. Many of the discussions at BOPA highlighted the benefits of these treatments and the challenges for some patients of health economics, equitable access, and long lead times."

Conor Sadlier – Sales Manager, Fresenius Kabi Ireland

"It's important for us to be aware of the future treatment developments for cancer care, helping us to plan for the future. The networking opportunities facilitate us to help each other solve problems by looking at solutions that other centres in Ireland have found."

Eoin Tabb – Chief II Pharmacist, Clinical Cancer Services, University Hospital Waterford.



"Having recently moved into the cancer speciality the BOPA conference was a great opportunity for me to gain knowledge of current and upcoming cancer treatments in areas such as breast, melanoma, and immunotherapy. I feel I've come away with a much better understanding of treatments and a good foundation of learning to develop further back in practice. I found it very inspirational to hear about novel pharmacist roles such as in supportive care, and innovative practices to streamline capacity and develop the future cancer workforce. I also really enjoyed meeting other cancer pharmacists to learn and share practice and ideas from other hospitals and forge connections with other teams."

Megan Hockly – Senior Oncology Pharmacist, University Hospital Galway

"Learning from the NHS specialist Pharmacists and future potential roles for pharmacists is inspiring and shows how our role could be further expanded in Ireland. Provides a great networking opportunity among colleagues and shows how we are all facing the same issues with capacity and evolving treatments."

Olivia Flynn – Chief II Pharmacist, Cancer Services, University Hospital Limerick

"The BOPA 2023 Symposium was an excellent event which showcased development and innovation in the pharmaceutical industry and in clinical practice within cancer care in the UK. It was very inspiring to hear from healthcare and industry professionals about projects which have improved cancer services by increasing aseptic unit capacity, reducing waiting times and treatment-related side effects, and improving healthcare experiences for patients in minority groups. Congratulations to the BOPA committee for successfully delivering this event and a huge thank you to Fresenius Kabi for providing the opportunity to attend it alongside pharmacists working in other Irish cancer services."

Hannah O' Connor – Senior Pharmacist, Haematology, Oncology & Aseptics, St Vincent's University Hospital

The clinical programme provided comprehensive updates on current and future best practice cancer treatments alongside fascinating insights into future developments in ATMPs [Advanced Therapy Medicinal Products] and immunotherapy. Elaine Vicker's talk "Innovations in antibody-based cancer treatments" was a particular highlight. BOPA 2023 delivered some thought-provoking discussions on health equality and the delivery of patient centred cancer care in diverse populations amidst a capacity crisis. The launch of the SACT [Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy] digital passport on Sunday morning demonstrated how a national, standardised, transferable training tool can be developed - this could be very useful in an Irish context. It was a pleasure to meet the other delegates and exchange ideas





our UK colleagues face many of the same challenges as ourselves in terms of capacity and service provision. There were also some very interesting lectures given by our oncology nursing colleagues showcasing some of the fantastic work they do. Of course, a major part of attending the conference is the invaluable networking opportunity it gives us. It's always great to meet our own colleagues both new and old."

Yvonne Cummins - Senior Pharmacist, Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital Drogheda

The team at Fresenius Kabi Ireland would like to thank the organising committee of BOPA 2023 and the staff at the ICC for their assistance and hospitality.

BOPA: British Oncology Pharmacy Association, CAR-T: Chimeric Antigen Receptor T, ICC: International Conference Centre, TIL: Tumour-Infiltrating Lymphocytes, ATMPs: Advanced Therapy Medicinal Products, SACT: Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy.

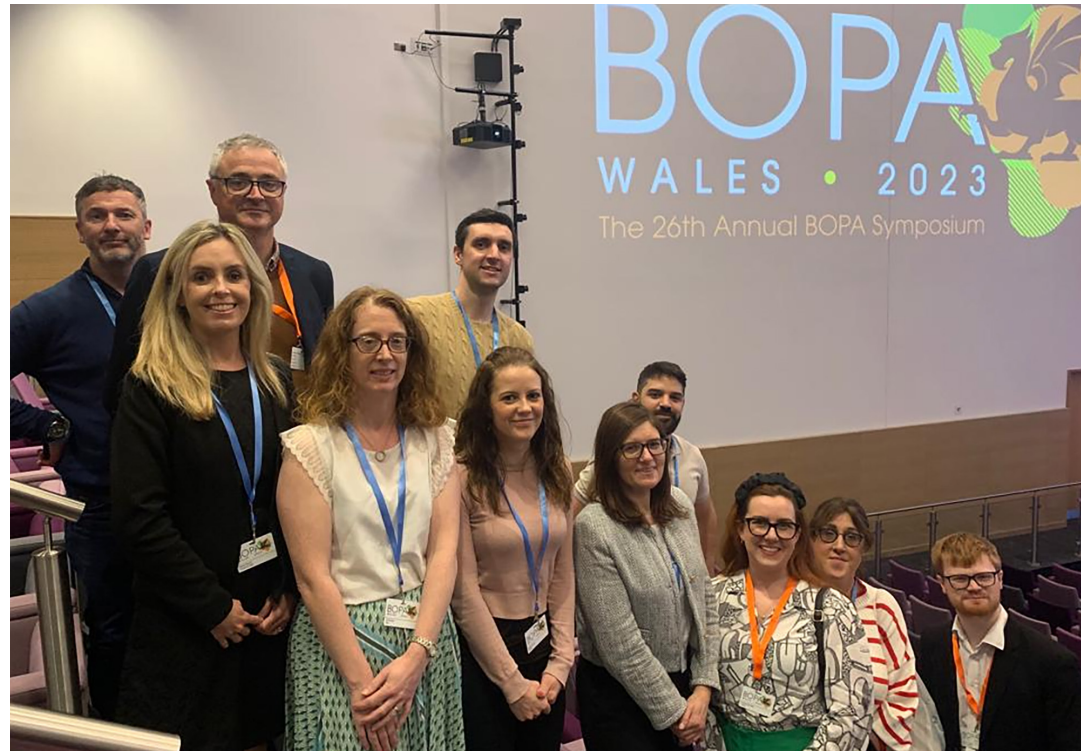
and information. All in all, a very successful weekend with plenty of food for thought!

Irene Maher - Chief II Pharmacist, Cancer Services, Mercy University Hospital

"Many thanks to FK team for providing me with the opportunity to participate in the BOPA symposium and for their exceptional care. The conference not only provided a fantastic networking platform but also highlighted the common challenges we all encounter in managing capacity and adapting to evolving treatments. The program offered in-depth updates on both current and upcoming best practices in cancer treatments, coupled with exciting glimpses into the future of this field. I found it exceptionally valuable to connect and interact with fellow colleagues."

Bruno Delgado – Pharmacist, St Vincent's Private Hospital

"BOPA as always was both educational and enjoyable. Love the mix of clinical, research, hot topics and extending pharmacy role sessions offered. It's great to have an opportunity to learn about the research, development, and innovative projects that our UK colleagues are involved in. I always find it thought provoking. Hopefully, we have all taken away some useful information and ideas to help us in our own practice. Unfortunately, we also learned that



Pictured above from left to right: Derek Kelly (FK), Rachel Wright (FK), Keith Sheridan (FK), Olivia Flynn (UHL), Eoin Tabb (UHW), Megan Hockly (UHG), Yvonne Cummins (LOL), Bruno Delgado (SVPH), Hannah O' Connor (SVUH), Irene Maher (MUH) and William Twaddle (FK).

Fresenius Kabi Limited - Fresenius Kabi Ireland, Unit 3B Fingal Bay, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin, Ireland
 T: +353 (0)1 8413030 | F: +353 (0)1 8496949 | E: FK-enquiries.Ireland@fresenius-kabi.com |
 www.fresenius-kabi.com/ie/

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