

Dr Valerie Jenkins, Deputy Director, Senior Research Fellow in Sussex Health Outcomes Research and Education in Cancer

'Chemo Brain – Myth or fact?'

In her address to the ICPV summer school, Dr Valerie Jenkins explained the reported problems from patients of 'Chemo Brain' otherwise known as 'Cog Fog' and the clinical trial being undertaken to analyse this symptom.

Cancer patients have reported that during or after chemotherapy that they have problems with simple cognitive tasks, for example forgetting things that they would normally remember, using wrong words in a conversation or difficulty carrying out work based tasks.

To analyse this symptom known as Cog Fog the researchers would need to record the patient's cognitive levels, pre, during and post treatment.

It would also need to be borne in mind that other factors can have an impact on memory including fatigue, anxiety, stress and depression.

ICPV members participated in some short exercises as part of the summer school which showed how simple distractions could have an impact on short term memory.

Dr Valerie Jenkins new study funded by Breast Cancer Care for patients with breast cancer will analyse 'Chemo Brain' or 'Cog Fog' at the following stages:-

- Pre Surgery
- Post-surgery but pre chemotherapy
- Post chemotherapy

Blood samples, MRI and cognitive tests will be used at each of these stages.

The results of the trial are due to be published in November 2014 and we look forward to reviewing the results.

Linda Larter