

## S RTP - Project Description Form #224

### PART I:

**Name of Schulich faculty member who will supervise the project** Ji-Hyun Jang

**Supervisor's Schulich, Western, Hospital or Lawson Email** ji-hyun.jang@lhsc.on.ca

**Schulich Department** Obstetrics & Gynaecology

### PART II - Project Description

**Title of Project** Financial Toxicity Amongst Patients with Gynecologic Malignancies in Southwestern Ontario

#### Background

A strength of the Canadian healthcare system is its predominantly publicly funded design, minimizing financial barriers to access medically necessary care. However, patients are nevertheless subject to indirect out-of-pocket costs and opportunity costs associated with their care such as outpatient prescription medications, home care, allied health care such as physiotherapy, supplements, devices, cost of travel, and lost income due to illness and treatment. Financial toxicity refers to the strain of these costs, particularly amongst patients with cancer.

Understanding, measuring, and managing financial toxicity are important to ensure that cancer patients can successfully undergo treatment and that survivorship is associated with excellent quality of life. Studies of gynecologic oncology patients outside of Canada have shown that patients experiencing high financial toxicity will delay or avoid care as strategies to reduce cost. Severe financial burden is associated with increased mortality. Financial toxicity may be a key factor that is missing in our understanding of treatment adherence and the timing of presentation to care. Improving our understanding of financial toxicity may not only reduce socioeconomic effects of malignancy, but may also improve oncologic outcomes.

To our knowledge, one previous study investigating financial toxicity faced by patients with cancer in Canada, revealed distress from financial burden of cancer to be as prevalent as 71%. To date, there is a paucity of literature focused on financial toxicity in gynecologic oncology patients in Canada.

#### Hypothesis

The objectives of this study are to: 1.) Determine common sources of financial toxicity; 2.) Describe the morbidity of financial toxicity on patients including seeking care, and adherence to treatment plan; and 3.) Identify possible interventions to minimize financial toxicity in a gynecologic oncology population in Southwestern Ontario.

#### Proposed Methodology

This will be a cross-sectional study of gynecologic oncology patients recruited from a single academic tertiary centre in Southwestern Ontario, the LRCP.

Participants will complete the survey including the COmprehensive Score for Financial Toxicity (COST) tool and a subset of participants will also complete semi-structured interviews. We will recruit patients via paper advertisements and verbally in the clinic. We will link responses from the survey and interviews to clinical data that will be acquired via chart review. We will also conduct confidential, one-on-one semi-structured phone interviews with a subset of participants for a deeper narrative understanding of their experiences with gynecologic cancer and financial toxicity. All interviews will be transcribed and then thematic analyses conducted on the transcriptions.

#### Expected Outcomes

Findings of this study may also be helpful to identify current barriers leading to financial toxicity amongst patients with

gynecologic malignancies in Southwestern Ontario and find potential solutions to minimize the morbidity of financial toxicity. The results of this study may be helpful in future research studies and program development.

**Research Environment - Description of the number of research personnel, primary location of research, size of lab, etc**

The primary location of research will be Victoria Hospital and the London Regional Cancer Program. There is currently an OB/GYN resident and medical student involved in this project.

**Names and titles of other individuals who will be involved with the research project?**

Dr. Ji-Hyun Jang (PI, Assistant Professor Departments of Obstetrics & Gynecology and Oncology), Dr. Sara Jones (PGY3, Obstetrics & Gynecology), Yasaman Javadzadeh (Year 3 Medical Student)

**Can this project be done remotely?** No

**Duration of Project** One Summer

**Expected Objectives/Accomplishments for Student?**

- 1.) To gain a better understanding of financial toxicity amongst individuals with gynecologic malignancies
- 2.) To gain a better understanding of operations at the London Regional Cancer Program
- 3.) To gain a better understanding of quantitative and qualitative research methods
- 4.) To assist in participant recruitment, collection of quantitative and qualitative data
- 5.) To complete preliminary data analysis, interpretation, and presentation of results

**PART III - Certifications**

**If the project will require any certification - Human Ethics approvals from one or more of the following offices, please check the appropriate box below.**

**Human Ethics: If you have the protocol information, please enter it below (or enter the status of the approval).** REB for project obtained. Amendment will need to be submitted to add the research student.

**Note: certification approval should be obtained prior to the start of the summer. Projects without this approval will not be a priority for funding.**