American College of Gastroenterology Taps Dr. Patricia Jones for Hepatocellular Virtual Grand Rounds

More than 300 U.S. gastroenterologists, hepatologists and other clinicians took time out of their busy practices in late August to log on for the presentation titled, “Hepatocellular Carcinoma: Epidemiology, Diagnosis and Treatment,” by Patricia D. Jones, M.D., researcher at Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center and assistant professor of clinical medicine at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine.

Presented during the American College of Gastroenterology’s Virtual Grand Rounds, it is a weekly “lunch and learn” opportunity for members to stay current during the pandemic by

Patricia Jones, M.D.
learning from recognized GI experts, according to Dr. Jones.

“My goal was to help people understand the changing epidemiology of hepatocellular carcinoma and explain the diagnostic algorithm and latest in treatment for this cancer,” said Dr. Jones, who is also a physician within the Division of Digestive Health and Liver Diseases at the University of Miami Health System. “Hepatocellular carcinoma is the most common type of liver cancer. Liver cancer is the seventh-most common cancer worldwide, but the second-most common cause of cancer mortality.”

Liver Cancer Cases Rising

Hepatocellular carcinoma cases are on the rise, in part, because of an increase in fatty liver disease.

Prior to 2017, systemic treatments for these patients were limited. Treatment options have skyrocketed since and include more chemotherapy options and systemic therapies, such as immunotherapy, according to Dr. Jones.

The impressive attendance at Dr. Jones’ Virtual Grand Rounds talk reflects a growing awareness of the burden of disease related to hepatocellular carcinoma, said Paul Martin, M.D., professor and chief of the Division Digestive Health and Liver Diseases at the Miller School.

“It also reflects the multidisciplinary expertise available at the Miller School, and Dr. Jones’ key role in running the tumor board and our program,” Dr. Martin said.

Early Treatment Vital

The American College of Gastroenterology’s Virtual Grand
Rounds generally reach practicing gastroenterologists and hepatologists who might be among the first to encounter people with hepatocellular carcinoma, according to Dr. Jones.

“A lot of people think hepatocellular carcinoma is a death sentence, but it is not if we start treatment earlier in the disease process,” Dr. Jones said.

Dr. Jones said the American College of Gastroenterology chose her for the presentation because of her expertise in hepatocellular carcinoma. She has presented on the topic internationally and at the Florida GI Society Annual Meeting. The topic has been well received but the attendance at the most recent virtual event surprised even Dr. Jones, who like many of her colleagues are balancing work and family life during the pandemic.

“With all that is going on, people still want to learn and make time for it in the middle of their days,” Dr. Jones said. “There was a lot of engagement during the talk. Attendees had some fantastic questions. With all the pressure placed on health care workers right now, we continue to make sure we are up-to-date on the latest treatment options so that we can provide the best care for our patients.”

Dr. Jones’s presentation is archived for American College of Gastroenterology members on GI.org

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