

Psychosocial Oncology Program

Dr. Karen Zhang, C.Psych.

The Juravinski Cancer Centre (JCC) is a regional referral centre for central-west Ontario. With many patients coming from outside of Hamilton, the JCC collaborates with providers in the patient's home community. JCC is where cancer treatments such as chemotherapy and radiation take place, as well ground-breaking cancer research. There are no overnight beds at the cancer centre.

The JCC recently invested in the Psychosocial Oncology Program (PSO), which psychology has a large role in setting up. PSO is dedicated to helping adult patients and their families cope with the psychological, emotional, social, spiritual, and functional impact of cancer. The program provides outpatient and inpatient care across the cancer continuum and for a variety of cancer disease sites, including breast, lung, head and neck, haematology, gastrointestinal, gynecological, genitourinary, central nervous system, skin, endocrine and sarcoma. Residents actively work as part of an interdisciplinary team consisting of psychologist, psychiatrists, nurses, social workers, dieticians, and oncologists. They routinely participate and present at interdisciplinary rounds that review complex patient cases. Training opportunities may include providing psychological assessments for distress and functioning, inpatient consultations, and short-term individual and group interventions. Psychological interventions target anxiety, mood, grief, end-of-life concerns, caregiver burden, body image, fatigue, insomnia, adherence and adjustment-related concerns. Residents may also co-lead psycho-education sessions to build staff, patient and caregiver capacity to address psychosocial needs that impact cancer care. Opportunities for program evaluation and research may also be available.

Potential practicum students are encouraged to contact Dr. Cometto for additional information regarding opportunities with this exciting new program!

Jennifer Cometto, Ph.D., C.Psych.
Psychology Practicum Coordinator
Child and Youth Mental Health Program
Regional Outreach and Urgent Access Service
McMaster Children's Hospital
(905) 521-2100 Ext. 72903
comettoj@hhsc.ca