



Braemar haematologist Natalia Gavrilova, says high-tech medical care must be complemented by humanity and compassion to get the best results...

Haematologist Natalia Gavrilova is at the cutting edge of advances in diagnosis and treatment of diseases of the blood, including blood cancers such as lymphoma, Chronic Lymphocytic Leukaemia (CLL) and myeloma. Like others in her field, she is excited by new techniques and technologies that push the boundaries, plus allow her to fine-tune treatments, based on a range of individual variables. She likens her work to an artist, selecting the best colours from a vast palette to achieve the best results. "In some cases, where a cancer is assessed as being curable, a harsh treatment with no modifications might be best. With non-curable myeloma, we call on the best care to achieve a good quality of life."

While some treatment regimens are still in experimental stages overseas, and not yet available in New Zealand, she is encouraged by the results. In 2013, she successfully treated a patient likely facing death with a regimen at the time used only in a handful of cases elsewhere in the world. That treatment is now standard in New Zealand for Double Hit Lymphoma.

But, while the breakthroughs in technology are extraordinary, she says they must be complemented by high-touch care, the compassion that comes when clinicians understand the needs and concerns of patients and their families and can understand and have empathy for what they are experiencing. Cancer care is a high emotion service, where patients often feel powerless with high levels of worry and fear, she says. A growing body of evidence indicates kindness holds the power to help people cope – and heal.

At Braemar Hospital, where she practises at the Oncology and Haematology Unit, she has seen first-hand the benefits of an empathetic approach.

"The nursing staff are exceptional in their care and attention to detail. Patients feel listened to." She says the hospital makes every attempt to reduce stress and anxiety." This includes timely access to diagnosis and treatment -usually within days – and flexible arrangements to suit a patient's needs. Chairs have been

especially designed for patients who have to sit for up to eight hours during chemotherapy and immune therapy, and there is a range of supportive services. including access to psychologists to talk through issues and concerns. Braemar is also able to offer some drugs not available through the public health system.

Natalia grew up in Russia and emigrated to Israel in 2000 to take up a position at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem – Israel’s largest and most advance bone marrow transplant unit. She is a consultant haematologist at Waikato Hospital, with a special interest in malignant and general haematology, and also a haematopathologist, determining and diagnosing the cause of blood diseases.

Braemar treats:

- patients with suspected and confirmed diagnosis of myeloma, lymphoma, CLL for investigations and comprehensive treatment
- patients with cytopenia (anaemia, neutropenia, thrombocytopenia) for investigations and management
- patients with suspected myeloproliferative disorders (Essential Thrombocytopenia, Polycythaemia, Myelofibrosis) for diagnosis, treatment

The hospital also provides outpatient chemotherapy and supportive treatment. Monitoring, with regular clinical reviews and long-term follow-ups are carried out.

Leukaemia and Blood Cancer NZ estimates an estimated 21,000 people have blood cancer or a related condition in New Zealand. Blood cancers combined (leukaemia, lymphoma, and myeloma) are the fifth most common form of cancer in New Zealand. Further information about treatments can be found on the website:

www.leukaemia.org.nz



Dr Greg Spark – Deputy Chairman



DR NATALIA GAVRILOVA

QUALIFICATIONS

- MD (Omsk, Russia, 1997)
- RACP (2013)
- RCPA (2013)

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AREAS OF SPECIALISATION

Malignant and general haematology with interests in Lymphoma, Myeloma, CLL.

SPECIALIST TRAINING

- Bachelor of Medicine and Master Degree in Medicine, Omsk State Medical University, Russian Federation 1997
- Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, 2013
- Fellow of the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia, 2013

POSITIONS & MEMBERSHIPS

- Consultant Haematologist, Waikato DHB
- Consultant Haematologist and Haematopathologist, Pathlab, Hamilton
- Principal Investigator Myeloma, Lymphoma clinical trials, Waikato DHB
- Haematology teaching coordinator, Waikato DHB