

## **SUMMARY**

### **DR. KANG HOWSON-JAN (CPSO# 51384)**

#### **1. Disposition**

On February 12, 2018, the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (“the Committee”) required internist Dr. Howson-Jan to appear before a panel of the Committee to be cautioned with respect to shortcomings in the assessment and management of a patient with recurrent lymphoma.

The Committee also requested that Dr. Howson-Jan provide a written report, approximately 2,000 words in length, with respect to the assessment of follicular lymphoma, and including his reflection on this case and a description of changes he has made to his practice as a result of this experience.

#### **2. Introduction**

A patient complained to the College that Dr. Howson-Jan failed to perform physical examinations at visits or take his concerns seriously, despite increased swelling and other signs and symptoms, resulting in a delayed diagnosis of and treatment for recurrent follicular non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma. The patient also had concerns about Dr. Howson-Jan’s attitude towards the prior treatment the patient had received.

Dr. Howson-Jan responded that when assessed, the patient’s main complaints were joint and back pain, but were not significant. When a CT scan report showed lymphadenopathy, he attempted to match the patient’s complaints with the CT scan findings to determine whether lymphoma was the main cause of the patient’s symptoms before initiating chemotherapy. Following an ultrasound that showed lower abdomen and pelvis bilateral lymphadenopathy, he was awaiting the patient’s scheduled appointment with a urologist and expected to be informed if that assessment concluded that the patient’s symptoms were likely due to

lymphoma. He has no further knowledge regarding the course of events after the patient's last visit in August 2015.

### **3. Committee Process**

As part of this investigation, the Committee retained an Independent Opinion provider (IO provider) who specializes in haematology and internal medicine. The IO provider reviewed the entire written investigative record and submitted a written report to the Committee.

An Internal Medicine Panel of the Committee, consisting of public and physician members, met to review the relevant records and documents related to the complaint. The Committee always has before it applicable legislation and regulations, along with policies that the College has developed, which reflect the College's professional expectations for physicians practising in Ontario. Current versions of these documents are available on the College's website at [www.cpso.on.ca](http://www.cpso.on.ca), under the heading "Policies & Publications."

### **4. Committee's Analysis**

The IO provider outlined significant concerns about Dr. Howson-Jan's care of the patient, indicating that Dr. Howson-Jan did not meet the standard of practice—which would be to take into consideration observations from multiple sources, imaging results, and obvious physical examination findings, and initiate systemic chemotherapy in a patient with persistent lymphoma and bothersome symptoms—regardless of whether he agreed with the initial therapy the patient had received elsewhere. The IO provider also stated that Dr. Howson-Jan displayed a lack of knowledge, skill, and judgement on a number of occasions and, in this particular case, exposed the patient to harm.

The Committee shared the IO provider's concerns, noting that Dr. Howson-Jan did not examine the patient, did not associate the patient's symptoms of enlarging lymph nodes in the groin and chest with the most obvious cause, and did not initiate treatment for the patient at the

appropriate time. The Committee also noted that Dr. Howson-Jan did not help the patient make arrangements though Community Care Access Centre for home care, did not obtain the patient's medical records, and was not fully informed about the efficacy of the patient's prior treatment for lymphoma. The Committee further acknowledged there were communications problems between Dr. Howson-Jan and the patient.

The Committee commented on the positive results from a broader review of Dr. Howson-Jan's practice but determined that on the basis of Dr. Howson-Jan's care to this patient, a caution and written homework was the appropriate disposition.