



HEAL UKRAINE GROUP

In Collaboration
with:



As the war in Ukraine continues to rage, we remain steadfast at HUG to address the acute and ongoing healthcare needs of the country. The will, determination, and fortitude of the Ukrainian people, along with their spirit and commitment, inspire us as a collaborative team. Ukrainians are fighting on behalf of all of us who believe in civil liberties, self-determination, and democracy. At HUG, we counter the deliberate destruction of healthcare infrastructure and personnel, caused by the Russian Army, via help for Ukrainian clinicians and medical facilities to both stabilize the current medical response and plan for the future. We accomplish this through supplying medical aid and, more sustainably, through provision of educational and training opportunities for Ukrainian physicians.

Please find updates of the Heal Ukraine Group programs and efforts below. The faces of Ukrainian patients and healthcare workers may be blurred to protect their identities at this time of war.

[All donations support medical relief and training for Ukrainian physicians.](#)



Dr. Jacqueline A. Hart Returns to Lviv, First Medical Union to Confer with Current and Potential Partners

With more specific details to share in September's HUG newsletter, Dr. Hart's visit to Ukraine involved many key connections, reinforcing existing partnerships and laying the groundwork for new initiatives.

Bringing it Back Home

Updates on the medical work of past scholars of the VIC-HUG-SAR observership program.

Dr. Volodymyr Artyomenko, et al. Present at the 21st Fetal Medicine Foundation World Congress in Lisbon: *Does War Increase the Likelihood of Disrespectful and Abusive Obstetrical Care?*



Dr. Volodymyr Artyomenko (Obstetrician and Gynecologist from Odessa, Ukraine who observed at MGH from December 2023 through January 2024 under the guidance of [Dr. Christina Duzyj-Buniak](#), Director of Maternal Fetal Medicine Fellowship at MGH) had a [poster presented in June 2024](#) at the [21st Fetal Medicine Foundation World Congress in Lisbon](#). The poster highlights ongoing research evaluating the influence of sustained conflict on the delivery of respectful maternity care* in Odessa. The project, designed in collaboration with colleagues from MGH including Dr. Duzyj-Buniak, involves cross sectional analysis of quantitative surveys administered to clinicians who work on the complicated pregnancy, labor and delivery and postpartum floors of Odessa City Maternity Hospital No. 5. The study will quantify existing standards of care, define areas for improvement, and begin to evaluate the impact of war on the delivery of respectful maternity care. While the study remains in progress, the aim is to uncover the impact of ongoing violence from war on obstetrical practices, as well as contribute to development of trainings, educational materials, and support systems that will improve quality of care and ensure respectful clinical approaches despite societal challenges, lack of adequate resources and staffing, and disruption from an ongoing conflict that has become the reality for Ukrainians.

**Of note, the opposite of “respectful maternity care” is disrespectful or even abusive care referred to as D&A. This can range from non-consented obstetrical care to discrimination in delivery of services and even to aggressive or violent practices. The question of whether ongoing war and conflict influences how practitioners provide obstetrical care is crucial for a host of reasons and relates to additional queries of the types of support clinicians need to optimize best practices, even under the worst conditions.*

Dr. Veronika Patsko Organizes Hybrid Conference at the National Cancer Institute of Ukraine to Impart State-of-the-Art approaches to Colorectal Cancer Care



Left photo - Dr. Veronika Patsko (left) with Ukrainian and international colleagues who presented at the colorectal conference. Right photo - Ukrainian physicians observe a procedure as part of the two-day conference.

Inspired by lessons garnered while studying at MGH, Dr. Veronika Patsko, VIC HUG SAR Scholar from October 2022, designed, organized, and executed a [hybrid conference](#) with the National Cancer Institute (NCI) of Ukraine in collaboration with the Ukrainian Union of Oncological Surgery (USSO) in June 2024, entitled “Updates in Colorectal Cancer Treatment.” A breadth of clinical experts from Ukraine, the United Kingdom (U.K.), and the United States (U.S.) presented data-driven, clinically relevant topics to the audience of more than 300 in-person attendees and 1,000 online.

Amongst the presenters who braved the trip to Kyiv to participate in person was [Liliana Bordeianou, MD, MPH](#), Professor of Surgery, Harvard Medical School; Co-Director, MGH Pelvic Floor Disorders Center; and Co-chair, MGB Colorectal Surgery Collaborative from MGH. Dr. Bordeianou presented (beginning at 1:57:00) on total neoadjuvant therapy (TNT) for locally advanced rectal cancer (LARC) during the first day of lectures and then demonstrated Laparoscopic Surgery for Colon Cancer during the practicum on day two of the conference. The TNT approach, as explained by Dr. Bordeianou, involves induction chemotherapy followed by (or preceded by) chemoradiation prior to surgical resection and is now considered standard of care in the U.S, including that it is

incorporated into guidelines of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) because the evidence shows improved survival, reduced morbidity from surgery, and, at times, ability to avoid surgery altogether for LARC. Dr. Bordeianou emphasized to her Ukrainian colleagues that this is a breakthrough in the treatment of LARC and requires interdisciplinary care for patients.

Another of Dr. Patsko's mentors and collaborators from her VIC HUG SAR observership, [Motaz Qadan, MD, PhD](#), Chair of Surgical Oncology, Deputy Clinical Director of MGH Cancer Center, and Head of the Liver Surgery Program at MGH, presented virtually on Intrarterial Chemotherapy for Unresectable Liver Metastases via a Hepatic Arterial Infusion pump. Dr. Qadan (whose talk begins at 5:43:48) reviewed the data regarding post-placement survival as well as percentage of patients whose metastatic liver disease became resectable; he also, through video presentation and discussion, demonstrated options for surgical approaches to place the pump. At the end of his talk, he gave a very nice shout out to Dr. Patsko and offered his sincere support for Ukraine to win this war and for the citizens to persist in their strength and resiliency.

The evidence-packed conference spanned two full days and involved practical teaching of colorectal and hepatobiliary surgical techniques. **The examples shared demonstrate the value in the collaboration that Dr. Patsko experienced while studying at MGH and how the learning inspired her to create modes for disseminating the state-of-the-art information.** The talks by Drs. Qadan and Bordeianou, who are both surgeons while Dr. Patsko is a medical oncologist, also emphasize the value of interdisciplinary collaboration and care.

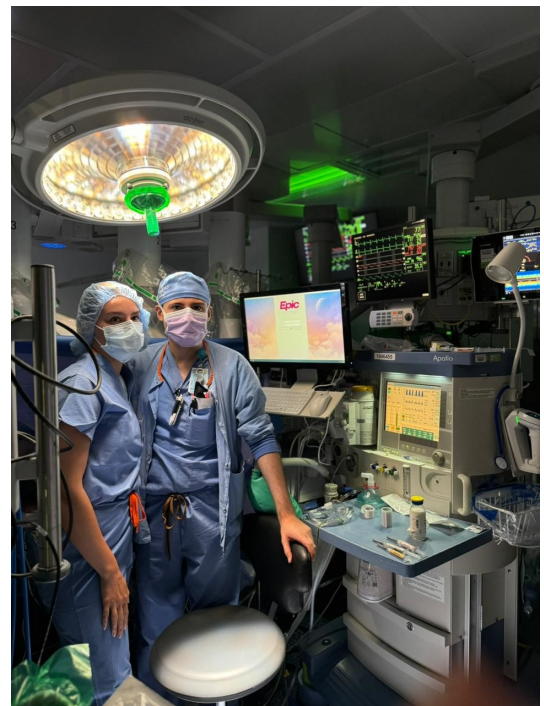
Italian Society of Medical Oncology Invites Ukrainian Clinicians to Report on the War and its Impact on Their Practice:

Dr. Patsko has been particularly busy in recent months, applying her knowledge and experience. In addition to the conference she spearheaded on her home soil, described above, Veronika was invited by the Italian Society of Medical Oncology to share updates and perspectives about how [clinical oncologic care in Ukraine](#) persists even as the country is disrupted by ongoing war and its effects. As Dr. Patsko shared, administration of chemotherapy persists even in occupied territories, despite shortages of nursing and other ancillary care. Challenges are great in terms of getting supplies and proper medicine, particularly to dangerous locations that are under relentless attack by the Russian Army. In fact, administration of oncologic care even in major cities such as Kyiv generally take place in underground bunkers due to ongoing air raids, sirens, and the associated risks. Most hospital settings avoid the impact of blackouts by using generators.

Dr. Patsko describes that during the early months of the war, the routes in and out of Kyiv were severely restricted, exacerbating personnel absences because of the restrictions in traveling to and from work; this required that physicians (who often stayed overnight in hospital) assumed the usual duties of nurses, including mixing of the chemotherapy formulas, placing IVs, and administering the medications themselves.



Pictured is an underground chemo unit in Ukraine.



Left photo from left to right - Dr. Dariia Simchuk, Dr. Yi Zhang, MGH and Dr. Nataliya Matolinet. Right photo from left to right - Dr. Dariia Simchuk and an MGH clinician in the ICU.

Dr. Dariia Simchuk Returns to Massachusetts General Hospital; Drs. Roma Havduk and Nataliya Matolinet Join Her for the Visit

Dr. Dariia Simchuk, anesthesiologist from Kyiv, was our inaugural Ukrainian physician to join the VIC HUG SAR observership when the program launched in October of 2022. Dr. Simchuk spent three months at Boston-based hospitals focused on learning protocols to perform regional anesthesia, specifically nerve blocks -- a skill to facilitate management of war wounds in Ukraine. Dariia also studied that fall with a key member of our Scientific Advisory Board, Dr. Greg Ciottone, Founding Director of the BIDMC Disaster Medicine Fellowship Program.

Dr. Simchuk returned the summer of 2024 for a one-day training period with her colleagues: Dr. Roma Havduk, Head Anesthesiologist in Transplantology at Lviv First Medical Union and Dr. Nataliya Matolinet, Medical Director of Anesthesiology and Intensive Care at Lviv First Medical Union. The current observation took place at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) in Boston under the supervision and guidance of Dr. Ilan Mizrahi, Anesthesiology, Instructor, Harvard Medical School and Dr. Andrew Liteplo, Chief, Division of Ultrasound in Emergency Medicine; Director, Center for Ultrasound Research and Education.

Dariia was equally enthused to introduce her friends and colleagues to her host family in Boston – Michael Jonas and Karen Silver. Michael and Karen graciously opened their home to all three doctors during their New England visit. In fact, Dariia’s return to the U.S. this summer initially included only the Westcoast. Her Boston-based family wouldn’t hear of her being in the States without seeing her and meeting her close colleagues!



From left to right - Dr. Dariia Simchuk, Karen Silver, Dr. Roma Havduk, Dr. Nataliya Matolinet and Michael Jonas.

Dr. Ivan Budzan, Cardiovascular Surgeon Spent Three Weeks Studying Minimally Invasive Cardiac Surgery at MGH

Dr. Ivan Budzan is a cardiovascular surgeon who spent three weeks at MGH under the guidance of Dr. Serguei Melnitchouk, [Co-Director of the MGH Heart Valve Center](#); Founder of GMKA; and Founding member of HUG. During his time in Boston, Dr. Budzan observed a variety of cardiovascular procedures, including minimally invasive cardiac surgeries (MICS) for coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG), mitral valve repair, and cryoablation, as well as endovascular surgeries, and reoperative cardiac surgeries.

In addition, Dr. Budzan studied application of tools to analyze and integrate clinical data in order to inform medical decision making and improve patient outcomes, especially for complex patients who have co-morbid medical conditions.



“Thank you for your support from the beginning of the war, and for continuing to support us. Your help is really important and necessary for me, my colleagues, our hospitals, our patients and our country. It makes us stronger.” – Dr. Budzan

Thank you to our partners, [Harvard Scholars at Risk](#), the Baker Foundation, and the many philanthropists who donate to our VIC - Scholars at Risk Ukraine fund to help to support our ongoing efforts to improve medical care for Ukrainians.

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