

Dan Sargent, CCO Associate Editor and Mayo biostatistician and clinical trialist, dies unexpectedly at 46

Helen Seliman

Editorial Office, Chinese Clinical Oncology, AME Publishing Company, Guangzhou 510220, China

Correspondence to: Helen Seliman. Editorial Office, Chinese Clinical Oncology, AME Publishing Company, Guangzhou 510220, China.

Email: editor@thecco.net.

Submitted Sep 30, 2016. Accepted for publication Oct 10, 2016.

doi: 10.21037/cco.2016.10.10

View this article at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21037/cco.2016.10.10>

On September 22, 2016, Daniel J. Sargent (*Figure 1*), one of the world's foremost experts in oncology and clinical trials, passed away unexpectedly following an acute illness at St. Mary's Hospital, Mayo officials said. He was 46.

"This is shocking and sad news. His passing is really tremendous loss to CCO and the international cancer research. Dan is a superb biostatistician and clinical trialist." said Charles M. Balch, the Co-Editor-in-Chief of *Chinese Clinical Oncology (CCO)*.

"It is great pity and big loss. He has given so much to so many to CCO. He has led Statistics in Oncology Clinical Trials column in CCO. Our prayers are with his wife and families." Shukui Qin and Jiade J. Lu, the Editors-in-Chief of *CCO* expressed their thoughts when the grievous news hit the wires.

At the time of his death, Dr. Sargent was the Associate Editor for Statistics in Oncology Clinical Trials in the *CCO* journal, and the Chair of the Division of Biomedical Statistics and Informatics in the Department of Health Sciences Research at the Mayo Clinic.

In October 2012, he joined the Editorial Board of *CCO* and continuously contributed a lot to the journal since the very beginning of *CCO*. *"At that time, We were experiencing a hard time of CCO in the first few years of this newly founded publication. However, his enthusiasm and high production has been tremendous support for us. He helped us a lot."* said Grace S. Li, the Managing Editor of *CCO*, *"His untimely death may well vindicate the old adage: Only the good die young"*.

He co-chaired the special column "Statistics in Oncology Clinical Trials" in our journal the *CCO* with Dr. Qian Shi from the Division of Biomedical Statistics and Informatics, Mayo Clinic. This column has conveyed essential statistical knowledge of trial design, conduct, and monitoring for a



Figure 1 Associate Editor for Statistics in Oncology Clinical Trials in the *Chinese Clinical Oncology*, and the Chair of the Division of Biomedical Statistics and Informatics in the Department of Health Sciences Research at the Mayo Clinic.

wide range of researchers in the oncology area. It would not have been created if it were not for Dan's great efforts and particular leadership. We certainly would join hands and advance together though at this unfortunate time as his inspiring words *"Stronger together we are! -Daniel Sargent, PhD"* forwarded from Qian Shi's email *"We are still in shock, but gradually get back to normal work routine"*.

In 2015, Dr. Sargent served as Guest Editor of the focused issue for the *CCO* journal: Clinical Trials in the Genome Era—Study Designs and Endpoints, Practical Considerations with his colleagues Dr. Axel Grothey and Dr. Sumithra Mandrekar at Mayo Clinic. *"The world has lost one of its stars,"* Axel Grothey said. We once worked closely for this project since the early of 2015 with his powerful

leadership. His endless passion and talents, wonderful collaborative personality and the uncompromising quality of his team always gave me the motivation and confidence to proceed. He always read and replied with his ideas and thoughts to my every email the first time he saw. We enjoyed every moment we talked, cooperated with him. We are proud of being with him. Now it is hard to believe that the news “Moving forward: CCO is indexed in Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI)” we shared with Sargent became the last one. How I wish the fake obituary described in the Book “The Dead Beat” happened. A message received in our inbox “Hey, I was just killed by the toying obituary. Sorry for kidding all of you... Dan”.

“I am stunned and deeply saddened. I had worked closely with Dan for many years in CALGB clinical trials and on many research projects related to our common passion: colon cancer. I have always considered him a friend and more recently I have been his colleague at the Mayo Clinic” Carolyn Compton, an academic pathologist wrote to a group of colleagues and CCO editorial office. Sargent served as Group Statistician for Cancer and Leukemia Group B (CALGB) since 2010. David R. Byrd, a UW professor of surgery, the section chief of surgical oncology and the director of the Melanoma Centre said *“Dan was the right arm of Carolyn to get the PMC*

composition together and get it jump-started. We'll miss him”.

Alliance’s Bertagnolli describes Sargent as a “rare mentor and friend to so many”.

“His faculty members benefited by his approach of leading by guidance rather than by direction,” she said. *“He widely shared his love of research, his dedication to family, and his pleasure in getting good friends together for a meal. The quality of every facet of a full life was just better when Dan was around. He leaves behind many who will try very hard to follow his example”*.

We will never forget Dr. Sargent’s words *“Stronger together we are!”*. All CCO editorial office staff and broad members are always together with him in the road of pursuing our dreams and fighting with cancers *“We will keep your family in our prayers in this time of sorrow. God promised words give us comfort, peace, and hope”*.

Acknowledgements

None.

Footnote

Conflicts of Interest: The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

Cite this article as: Seliman H. Dan Sargent, CCO Associate Editor and Mayo biostatistician and clinical trialist, dies unexpectedly at 46. Chin Clin Oncol 2016;5(5):69. doi: 10.21037/cco.2016.10.10