

Henry Ford Cancer Institute

Cancer Research Advisory Group

Quarterly Newsletter

This is a quarterly newsletter to keep Henry Ford Cancer Researchers and Clinicians informed about local, regional and national cancer research-related news



Fall 2017

KEY REMINDERS

Internal Money for Cancer Researchers

The Hartman Funding Program “Near-Miss” Initiative is an open internal funding mechanism for HFCI investigators who have submitted a cancer research grant application to the NIH or DOD that has high potential for obtaining external funding and has been reviewed once, but missed the funding payline. Maximum allowable amount for RO1 grants is \$100K, R21 and DoD is \$50K. Interested researchers should contact Fatima Ogaily at fogaily1@hfhs.org.

HFCI – CRAG Grant Review Forum

Investigators in the early stages of grant development are invited to vet their ideas at a Cancer Research Advisory Group (CRAG) monthly meeting. The *HFCI – CRAG Grant Review Forum* is designed to give cancer researchers feedback on their new grant ideas or offer advice on grant resubmissions. Interested researchers should contact Fatima Ogaily at fogaily1@hfhs.org.



AWARDS



Jae Ho Kim, M.D. received an R21 grant from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) to conduct his research study “Improving the radiation Therapeutic ratio by inhibiting proinflammatory cytokines.” A long-time successful Henry Ford clinician scientist, Dr. Kim will collaborate with Dr. Steven Brown and other to determine whether a potential of a new class of compounds, selective inhibitors of dysregulated proinflammatory cytokines/chemokines, can increase the therapeutic gain for cancer patients receiving radiotherapy for tumors that are known to be radiation resistant. Successful pharmacological approaches to improve radiotherapy focus on tumor sensitization not on normal tissue protection. The results of this research can potentially help increase the therapeutic gain of radiotherapy, by simultaneously increasing the tumor response to radiation and decreasing the normal tissue toxicity.



Igor Rybkin, M.D., received a \$3.4 million contract from Merck Sharp & Dohme Corp, for his project, “A Phase III Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled Trial of Pembrolizumab in Combination with Etoposide/Platinum (Cisplatin or Carboplatin) for the First-Line Treatment of Subjects with Extensive Stage Small Cell Lung Cancer.” The project continues through February 2019.



Ding Wang, M.D., received a \$1.6 million contract from EMD Serono, Inc. for his project, “A Phase I, Open-Label, Uncontrolled, Multicenter, Dose-Escalation Study of M3541 in Combination with Palliative Radiotherapy in Subjects with Solid Tumors.” The project continues through May 2019.

2017 Early Career Investigator Award Winners

The Early Career Investigator Awards are designed to jump start the careers of junior investigators interested in establishing independence as cancer researchers. This year’s winners are **Tathiane M. Malta, Ph.D.** from the department of Neurosurgery and **Siamak P. Nejad-Davarani, Ph.D.** from the department of Neuroimaging.

Dr. Malta’s research proposal is entitled “*Defining stem cell epigenomic signatures associated with glioma progression.*” Dr. Nejad-Davarani’s research proposal is entitled “*Toward High-Precision MR-Guided Radiation Therapy.*” Dr. Malta and Dr. Nejad-Davarani will each receive \$25,000 for one year of research funding.



Siamak P. Nejad-Davarani, Ph.D.



Tathiane M. Malta, Ph.D.

NOTEWORTHY HFCI PUBLISHED RESEARCH

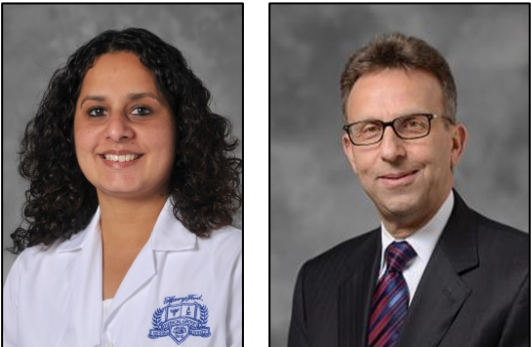
Cognitive Impairment in Head and Neck Cancer

Head and neck cancer (HNC) accounts for 3% of all malignancies in the United States, with greater than 13,000 dying of the disease annually. Previous research examining cognitive function prior to treatment for HNC, up to 47% of patients demonstrated cognitive impairment on neuropsychological tests. **Amy Williams, Ph.D.** and **Steven Chang, M.D.** (Otolaryngology) report on a study of 209 consecutive patients with a diagnosis of who had a pretreatment assessment with a clinical health psychologist. At pretreatment assessment, the Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA), a brief screening tool for cognitive function, was administered. Cognitive impairment was associated with current alcohol use, past tobacco use and number of pack years, time in radiotherapy, and adherence to treatment recommendations. The results argue for the incorporation of cognitive screening as part of pretreatment assessment for patients, as well as further research into more direct, causal relationships via longitudinal, prospective studies.



Williams AM, Lindholm J, Siddiqui F, Ghanem TA, Chang SS. Clinical Assessment of Cognitive Function in Patients with Head and Neck Cancer: Prevalence and Correlates. *Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg.* 2017 doi:10.1177/0194599817709235. [Epub ahead of print] PubMed PMID: [28585482](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28585482/).

Raman Rattan, Ph.D. and **Adnan Munkarah, M.D.** recently published a manuscript in Scientific Reports describing the metabolic adaptations that aid in platinum resistance in ovarian cancer cells. Using patient derived ovarian cancer cells and established ovarian cancer cell lines they show that the platinum chemo-resistant cells pose a highly active energy metabolism that allows them flexibility in using glycolysis or oxidative phosphorylation (mitochondrial respiration) as an energy source under stress. The flexibility in using different energy pathways may indicate a survival adaptation to achieve a higher 'cellular fitness' that may also be associated with chemoresistance. Further, validation of these observations in the larger cohorts of patient derived ovarian cancer cells, may provide a method to detect the chemo-sensitivity of ovarian tumors and also follow the development of chemoresistance.



To read more, click [here](#).

IMPORTANT DATES

Fall HFCI Cancer Research Grand Rounds



Dana E. Rollison, Ph.D. will be presenting
“Large-scale electronic capture of patient-reported data for clinical and research use in an academic cancer center” on
SEPTEMBER 22 FROM 8:00 – 9:00 AM IN E&R Room 2055.

This presentation will discuss Moffitt Cancer Center’s large-scale electronic system designed to capture patient-reported data on medical history, family history, lifestyle factors, quality of life and other exposures that can affect patient disease risk and/or treatment response. These data are captured electronically through Moffitt’s patient portal and subsequently integrated into Moffitt’s electronic medical record to support clinical decision making. These patient-reported data are also linked with clinical, administrative and biospecimen data integrated within Moffitt’s enterprise wide data warehouse to facilitate a wide variety of research initiatives. The presentation will include an overview of the information technology infrastructure and associated workflows, the scope of patient-reported data currently captured, examples of clinical and research uses of the data, and lessons learned for future implementations.



Anthony Alberg, Ph.D. will be presenting
“Examples of the continued role of epidemiology in generating the evidence-base for tobacco control policy” on
OCTOBER 27 FROM 8:00 – 9:00 AM IN E&R Room 2055.

The presentation will provide a series of examples illustrating the role of synthesis of epidemiologic and other lines of evidence to achieve inferences on questions of importance to tobacco control policy. Examples from reports of the US Surgeon General include the role of cigarette smoking on 1) diminished health status and 2) patient outcomes after a diagnosis of cancer or heart disease. An example from a National Academy of Medicine report entails evaluating the evidence about whether earlier age of initiation of cigarette smoking is associated with smoking with greater frequency and for a longer period of time, and decreased likelihood of quitting. This question has relevance to policies such as the minimum legal age of access to tobacco products.

Fall HFCI Cancer Research Luncheons

HFCI Research Luncheons serve as an opportunity to connect with fellow researchers and receive the latest cancer related research news and learn what your colleagues are working on.

🌟 Upcoming speakers, dates & topics include:

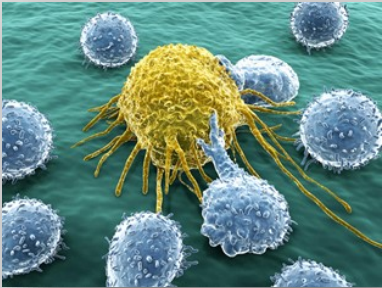
WHO: Josena Stephen, M.D.
WHAT: *“NGS identifies novel mutational landscape in ATC”*
WHEN & WHERE: SEPTEMBER 20 in E&R Room 2096 A&B

WHO: HFCI Research Team
WHAT: *“Updates on HFCI Biorepository and Histology Core Services”*
WHEN & WHERE: October 18 at One Ford Place, 1Coo

WHO: James Ewing, Ph.D.
WHAT: *“Noninvasive Measures of Tumor Physiology by MRI”*
WHEN & WHERE: NOVEMBER 15 in E&R Room 2096 A&B



HFCI’s 4th Annual Translational Oncology Research Symposium



4th Annual HFCI Translational Oncology Research Symposium
~ Cancer Immunology ~
Friday, November 10th
8:00 AM – 3:00 PM
E&R Room 2055

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT!

Mohamed Elshaikh, M.D. selected as discussant at ASTRO in Plenary Session
Of nearly 3,000 abstracts submitted each year, Dr. Elshaikh was selected to discuss his abstract to the entire ASTRO membership, an internal meeting for radiation oncology with over 11,000 in attendance. Congratulations, Dr. Elshaikh!



CSDR Expands Access to Data from 3,460 Clinical Trials
ClinicalStudyDataRequest.com (CSDR), a cross-industry initiative providing researchers with access to clinical trial data from 13 major pharmaceutical companies, including trials that involve multiple sponsors, has increased the number of trials available to more than 3,460. CSDR gives researchers access an array of clinical trial data in an effort to improve patient outcomes, collaboration and scientific knowledge in the industry.

To read more, click [here](#).

NIH Announces Upcoming Cancer Moonshot FOAs
Following receipt of the [Blue Ribbon Panel \(BRP\) report](#), the NCI established [implementation teams](#) to consider multiple ways to fund Cancer Moonshot-related research. The teams have identified and the [NCI Board of Scientific Advisors](#) has approved nine upcoming funding opportunity announcements that directly address the goals of the Cancer Moonshot. These funding opportunities are expected to be formally published in the coming months pending the appropriation of fiscal year (FY) 2018 funding for Cancer Moonshot.

To learn more about these FOAs please go [here](#).

If you have an item for the Quarterly Newsletter, feedback or questions, please contact **Fatima Ogaily** at FOgaily1@hfhs.org.