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News from the Association of American Cancer Institutes

May 2018

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MISSION

The Association is dedicated to reducing the burden of cancer by enhancing the impact of the nation's leading academic cancer centers.

ABOUT UPDATE

AACI *Update* is an e-newsletter for the cancer center directors and key contacts at AACI member institutions as well as individuals interested in the cancer center-related activities of AACI. AACI *Update* reports on the progress of AACI initiatives

Headlines

AACI President Participates in Biden Cancer Initiative Colloquium

AACI President **Stanton L. Gerson, MD**, director of the Case Comprehensive Cancer Center, in Cleveland, was a panelist at the Biden Cancer Initiative Colloquium, held April 17 at the American Association for Cancer Research Annual Meeting 2018, in Chicago. Dr. Gerson detailed a collaboration between Case and the GW Cancer Center, in Washington, DC, to launch a smoking cessation program.



"Public interest in cancer discovery has incredible traction, and many across the country are helping to both expand the impact of our discoveries and to instill a sense of urgency that we include every household in the benefits of cancer research," Dr. Gerson said after the event. [more...](#)

Stephenson Earns National Cancer Institute Designation

National, state and local leaders joined the Stephenson Cancer Center at the University of Oklahoma on May 2 to celebrate the center's designation as a National Cancer Institute (NCI) Cancer Center. With this award, the Stephenson Cancer Center joins an elite group of 70 NCI-Designated Cancer Centers nationwide.



"I am proud to stand with the Stephenson Cancer Center today as they announce NCI designation," said NCI Director Norman E. Sharpless, MD. "Designated cancer centers are recognized for their cutting-edge science and strong commitment to exceptional care of patients with cancer. They are at the core of the nation's cancer research effort." [more...](#)

AACI Executive Director to Retire in October

After nearly two decades of leadership and service as founding executive director of the Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI), **Barbara Duffy Stewart, MPH**, has announced her retirement, effective October 15.



Beyond building a staff and instituting sound governance practices, Ms. Stewart has guided AACI through a significant period of growth and influence. Membership has expanded from 78 cancer centers in 1999 to 98 today, including two in Canada, with annual meeting attendance increasing by 60 percent since 2011. [more...](#)

Pioneer in Breast Cancer Research, Precision Medicine to be Honored

Charles M. Perou, PhD, will receive the AACI Distinguished Scientist Award on October 1, during the 2018 AACI/CCAF Annual Meeting, in Chicago. Prior to the award presentation, Dr. Perou will deliver a talk focused on sequencing studies for gene expression analysis, specifically, on research results showing the value of sequencing-based approaches in breast and lung cancers.

Dr. Perou is The May Goldman Shaw Distinguished Professor of Molecular Oncology, Professor of Genetics and of Pathology &

along with other AACI endeavors that benefit the cancer community and highlights important news and events at AACI member institutions.

SUBMISSIONS

AACI encourages member institutions to submit cancer center highlights to AACI Update. News briefs are linked to complete stories posted on individual cancer center websites. Please e-mail materials to aaciupdate@aaci-cancer.org. AACI reserves the right to decide whether or not materials are appropriate for inclusion.

To subscribe to AACI Update, please send an e-mail to aaciupdate@aaci-cancer.org with your name, title, and telephone number asking to be added to the AACI's distribution list. To unsubscribe, please send an email with "unsubscribe" in the subject line.

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Laboratory Medicine, at UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center. His research interests span the disciplines of cancer biology, genomics, genetics, bioinformatics, statistics, systems biology, and the treatment of cancer patients in the clinic. [more...](#)

Advocates Thank Congress for Prioritizing Cancer Research



Representatives of the Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI) and the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) visited federal legislators last week to express their gratitude for a bipartisan spending package for fiscal year 2018 that prioritized funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the National Cancer Institute (NCI), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Before visiting legislators, Hill Day participants gathered for a breakfast briefing from U.S. Rep. Tom Cole (R-Oklahoma), who serves as the Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education, and Related Agencies, the subcommittee that oversees NIH funding. All told, 74 cancer research advocates from 21 states and the District of Columbia participated in 125 meetings with lawmakers and staff. Thirty-two cancer centers were represented. [more...](#)

Lara Named UC Davis Director

Primo Nery Lara, Jr., MD, has been named director of the National Cancer Institute-designated UC Davis Comprehensive Cancer Center, leading a team of more than 300 scientists with an estimated \$90 million in annual research funding and a clinical enterprise that serves more than 10,000 adult and pediatric patients throughout the region every year.

Dr. Lara, 52, replaces Ralph de Vere White, MD, who retired in 2016. As director, Dr. Lara will hold the Codman-Radke Chair in Cancer Research and serve as executive associate dean for cancer programs. Dr. Lara has served as acting director since July 2016. [more...](#)



Navajo Area Indian Health Service Unit Recognized for HPV Vaccinations



In partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Cancer Society, AACI recognized 10 pediatric practices across the nation in 2017 for exceptionally high rates of human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination. In March, representatives of the University of Arizona Cancer Center presented one of the awards to the Navajo Area Indian Health Service Unit in Chinle, AZ. [more...](#)

Record Number of Abstracts Submitted for 10th Annual AACI CRI Meeting



The 10th Annual AACI Clinical Research Initiative (CRI) Meeting will be held July 11-12, in Chicago, at the Loews Chicago O'Hare Hotel. The theme for this year's meeting is, "Leveraging Change to Advance Cures for Cancer Patients".

This year the CRI steering committee received 67 abstracts, more than twice as many as last year. Thirty AACI cancer centers made submissions, with many abstracts reflecting collaborations between AACI cancer centers and industry partners as well as AACI sustaining members. View a list of [submitted abstracts](#) on the AACI website. [more...](#)

PCLI Webinar - Multidisciplinary Cancer Care

AACI's Physician Clinical Leadership Initiative (PCLI) will present its next webinar, "Multidisciplinary Cancer Care", on Tuesday, May 8, at 1:00pm EST. The webinar will be hosted by AACI with PCLI Steering Committee Member Martha Mims, MD, introducing our guest presenter, **Brandon G. Smaglo, MD FACP**, medical director of the section of hematology/oncology and assistant professor at the Dan L. Duncan Comprehensive Cancer Center at Baylor College of Medicine.

To attend this webinar, please [register here](#). [more...](#)



NCI Public Affairs & Marketing Network Panel Includes AACI

Chris Zurawsky, AACI Director of Communications and Public Affairs, delivered a presentation at the annual meeting of the National Cancer Institute's (NCI) Public Affairs & Marketing Network (PAMN), hosted by the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, in Seattle. Mr. Zurawsky was part of a panel that included NCI, the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) and the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO). The session informed cancer center communications professionals about ways to collaborate with the organizations to help spread the news about work at their centers. [more...](#)



News from the Centers

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[Awards & Honors](#)



Cancer Researcher Honored for Work on Immunology

UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center

Antoni Ribas, MD, PhD, director of the tumor immunology program at UCLA's Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center, has been awarded the sixth American Association of Cancer Research-Cancer Research Institute Lloyd J. Old Award in Cancer Immunology. [more...](#)



Ashworth Elected Fellow of AACR Academy Class of 2018

UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center

Alan Ashworth, PhD, FRS, President of the UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center and Vice President of Cancer Services, UCSF Health, has been elected as a Fellow of the American Association of Cancer Research (AACR) Academy Class of 2018. The AACR Academy recognizes distinguished scientists whose major scientific contributions have propelled significant innovation and progress against cancer. [more...](#)



Pediatric Oncologist Honored on Top 10 List of Research Achievements

University of Virginia Cancer Center

A School of Medicine researcher's pioneering work in childhood cancer has been honored as one of the top 10 clinical research achievements of 2017. Daniel "Trey" Lee, MD, a pediatric oncologist at UVA's Children's Hospital, has been developing a new gene therapy to battle treatment-resistant leukemia in children and young adults. Known as chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cell therapy, the approach genetically modifies a patient's own immune cells to identify and kill cancer cells. [more...](#)

Winship Awards Three New Endowed Chairs

Winship Cancer Institute

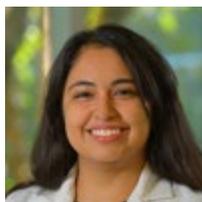
Three members of Winship Cancer Institute's Department of Radiation Oncology have been honored with endowed chair appointments in recognition and support of their outstanding contributions to Winship's cancer research: Xingming Deng, MD, PhD, is the inaugural holder of the Chair in Cancer Biology; David S. Yu, MD, PhD, is the inaugural holder of the Jerome Landry, MD Chair of Cancer Research; and, Hyunsuk Shim, PhD, is the inaugural holder of the Crocker Family Chair in Cancer Innovation. [more...](#)



Eischen Receives AACR-Bayer Innovation and Discovery Grant

Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center at Thomas Jefferson University

Christine M. Eischen, PhD, Co-Leader of the Molecular Biology & Genetics Program at the Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center at Jefferson, has been awarded a 2017 AACR-Bayer Innovation and Discovery Grant. Her grant is entitled, "Using PROTACS to target the Mdm2 oncoprotein." [more...](#)



Arora Receives DOD Career Development Award

Fox Chase Cancer Center, Temple Health

Sanjeevani Arora, PhD, has been selected by the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) to receive the FY17 Peer Reviewed Cancer Research Program Career Development award for her work in colorectal cancer. Dr. Arora's research in colorectal cancer focuses on developing a signature of DNA damage recognition and repair capacity as a biomarker that can potentially predict the effectiveness of neoadjuvant chemoradiation therapy for locally advanced stage rectal cancer patients. [more...](#)



Breast Cancer Expert Appointed to Komen Scientific Advisory Board

UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center

Susan G. Komen, the world's largest non-profit funder of breast cancer research, has named UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center's Lisa A. Carey, MD, to its Scientific Advisory Board. Dr. Carey is internationally recognized for her research investigating the genetic underpinnings of the molecular subtypes of breast cancer, especially

triple negative and HER2-positive breast cancer. [more...](#)

Grants & Gifts

\$14 Million to Create Program on Symptom Management, Mental and Spiritual Health

Indiana University Melvin & Bren Simon Cancer Center

A \$14 million gift to Indiana University School of Medicine will transform cancer care in Indiana by serving as the catalyst to build a comprehensive approach that helps patients and their families manage the symptoms, pain and stress that often accompany a cancer diagnosis. The gift from the Walther Cancer Foundation will create a supportive oncology program that goes beyond standard therapies such as surgery, chemotherapy and radiation and seeks to care for a patient's overall physical, mental and spiritual well-being. [more...](#)



Breast Cancer Screening Study Receives \$3 Million

Duke Cancer Institute

A team of multi-institution researchers led by Kevin Oeffinger, MD, has been awarded a four-year, \$3 million grant from the National Cancer Institute for their "EMPOWER-II Study" to promote breast cancer screening in women who survived childhood cancer. [more...](#)



Agreement Renewal Bolsters Liver Tumor Research

Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center

Sirtex Medical Ltd. has renewed a grant award to Dan Brown, MD, professor of Radiology and Radiological Sciences and chief of Interventional Oncology, and his Vanderbilt Health colleagues, for a research program designed to treat patients with liver tumors that cannot be addressed with surgery. The research agreement renewal from Sirtex will provide \$2.64 million over three years to support the patient registry. Combined with the original contract, reimbursement to Vanderbilt totals more than \$3 million. [more...](#)

VICC Breast Cancer Leaders Named Komen Scholars

Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center

Ingrid Mayer, MD, MSCI, Ingram Professor of Cancer Research and leader of the Breast Cancer Research Program at Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center (VICC), has been named a Komen Scholar for her leadership in breast cancer research. She is joined by Wayne Dornan, PhD, a patient research advocate at VICC, who will serve on the Advocates in Science Steering Committee for Susan G. Komen, the world's largest breast cancer organization. [more...](#)

Leadership Transitions



Farnham Named Interim Director of USC Norris

USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center

The University of Southern California (USC) Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center has named Peggy Farnham, PhD, interim director of the cancer center, effective June 1. Dr. Farnham is currently the co-leader of the epigenetics and regulation program and interim associate director for basic science at USC Norris Cancer Center. She is also the William M. Keck Professor of Biochemistry, and chair and a professor of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. [more...](#)



Duke Surgery Appoints New Chief of Surgical Oncology

Duke Cancer Institute

The Duke Department of Surgery is pleased to announce the appointment of Peter J. Allen, MD, as the new Chief of the Division of Surgical Oncology in the Department of Surgery and Chief of Surgery for the Duke Cancer Institute. Dr. Allen comes to Duke from the Memorial Sloan

Kettering Cancer Center. [more...](#)

New Director of Center for Personalized Medicine Appointed

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center

Agnieszka Witkiewicz, MD, has been appointed as the Director of the Center for Personalized Medicine at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center. She is also the Chief of Research and Biobanking in the Department of Pathology. Before coming to the cancer center, she worked at the University of Arizona as the Vice Chair of the Pathology Department, Director of the Gastrointestinal Pathology Fellowship Program, Director of Tissue Acquisition and Cellular/Molecular Analysis Shared Resource and Professor in the Department of Pathology.

[more...](#)



Cole Named Chief of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology

Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey

With an aim to propel precision medicine and other cutting-edge research to better inform treatment decisions for the youngest of patients, pediatric hematology/oncology leader Peter D. Cole, MD, has been named the Chief of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey and Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, and the proposed Embrace Kids Foundation Chair in Pediatric Hematology/Oncology, which was officially established by Rutgers Board of Governors. [more...](#)



Dorazio Joins WVU as Assistant Director For Administration

WVU Cancer Institute

Jennifer Dorazio has joined the WVU Cancer Institute (WVUCI) as the Assistant Director for Administration. She's a WVU graduate with over ten years of experience within the WVU Medicine system. In addition to serving as the Assistant Director for Administration with the WVUCI, she is also the Faculty Administrator for the Department of Medicine, Hematology Oncology. [more...](#)



Roswell Park Welcomes New Chair of Molecular and Cellular Biology

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center

A scientist with more than 20 years of experience has been appointed as the new Chair of Molecular and Cellular Biology at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center. Erik Knudsen, PhD, will also serve as the Co-Leader of the Cancer Center's Genetics and Genomics Program. Prior to this, he worked at the University of Arizona Cancer Center as the Associate Director of Basic Research, and Professor in the Department of Medicine, Division of Translational Medicine at the University of Arizona.

[more...](#)



Jefferson to Lead Head and Neck Cancer Program

University of Mississippi Medical Center Cancer Institute

Gina Jefferson, MD, MS, FACS, has been named head of the Interdisciplinary Head and Neck Cancer Program at the University of Mississippi Medical Center Cancer Institute. Dr. Jefferson, associate professor in the Department of Otolaryngology and Communicative Sciences, is a surgeon specializing in head and neck cancer and microvascular reconstruction. She is chief of the Division of Head and Neck Surgical Oncology. [more...](#)

Research Highlights

Major Milestone Reached in Effort to ID Cancers' Genetic Roots

Siteman Cancer Center

Researchers nationwide have reached a major milestone in describing the genetic landscape of cancer. Scientists at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis and other institutions have completed the genetic



sequencing and analyses of more than 11,000 tumors from patients, spanning 33 types of cancer - all part of The Cancer Genome Atlas (TCGA) project, funded by the National Cancer Institute and National Human Genome Research Institute, both of the National Institutes of Health. Li Ding, PhD, is a leading scientist on the project. [more...](#)

AML Patients Have Reduced Early Mortality at NCI-Designated Centers

UC Davis Comprehensive Cancer Center

Researchers at UC Davis have shown that patients with acute myeloid leukemia (AML) who received their care at a National Cancer Institute (NCI) cancer center in California had a dramatically reduced risk of early mortality. Using data from the California Cancer Registry and the Patient Discharge Dataset, the team determined that the risk was reduced by 53 percent. [more...](#)



New Technology Measures Tumors' Drug Resistance up to Ten Times Faster

VCU Massey Cancer Center

A group of scientists from VCU Massey Cancer Center and UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center, led by Jason Reed, PhD, have developed a new, high-speed microscopy platform that can measure a cancer cell's resistance to drugs up to 10 times faster than existing technology, potentially informing more effective treatment selection for cancer patients. [more...](#)



Classification for Cancers Revealed Based on Immune Response

UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center

Researchers co-led by UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center's Benjamin Vincent, MD, reported results from their analysis of immune responses in approximately 10,000 tumor samples. They revealed a new method for categorizing cancers based on their findings about the characteristics of the immune "microenvironment," which they discovered using different types of genomic analysis, including RNA-sequencing. [more...](#)



New Metric Defines Areas of Highest Prostate Cancer Burden

Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center at Thomas Jefferson University

To catch prostate cancer at earlier stages, when it's more easily treated, many institutions do community outreach and education sessions to explain why cancer screenings can be life-saving. In order to have the highest impact, however, institutions must select where to focus their efforts. Prostate cancer is most common among African American men and can be more aggressive in African American and men in a low socioeconomic bracket. Therefore, many institutions base their outreach on these two demographic factors. However, recent work shows that this may not be the best approach and offers another method for identifying areas with the highest prostate cancer burden. Charnita Zeigler-Johnson, PhD, MPH, is senior author on the study. [more...](#)

Researchers Identified a Protein Associated with Breast Cancer

Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center, UT Southwestern Medical Center

Researchers at UT Southwestern Medical Center have identified a protein that is strongly associated with metastatic breast cancer and that could be a target for future therapies. Previous research has shown that breast cancer cells that are more aggressive in an oxygen-deprived, or hypoxic, environment. A protein family called hypoxia-inducible factor (HIF) controls responses to hypoxia, switching on pathways that lead to cancer cell growth and spread. The new Roswell Park research shows that ZMYND8 is a regulator that activates

hundreds of HIF-dependent oncogenes in breast cancer cells. [more...](#)

Size, Structure Help Pozotinib Pose Threat to Deadly Exon 20 Lung Cancer

University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center

A drug that failed to effectively strike larger targets in lung cancer hits a bulls-eye on the smaller target presented by a previously untreatable form of the disease, researchers at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center report. Their research provided the scientific underpinning for clinical trials under way of the drug pozotinib against non-small-cell lung cancer that has a specific alteration called an exon 20 insertion in either the epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) or the human epidermal growth factor receptor 2 (HER2). [more...](#)

Two Colorado Studies Find Resistance Mechanisms in ALK+ And ROS1+ Cancers

University of Colorado Cancer Center

Targeted treatments like crizotinib block the actions of ALK and ROS1 cancers, thus killing cancers that depend on them. However, when doctors target ALK or ROS1, cancers often evolve new ways to survive. After a period of success, targeted treatments against ALK+ and ROS1+ lung cancers often fail. A University of Colorado Cancer Center study provides an in-depth look at how these cancers evolve to resist treatment. A second study demonstrates the ability to identify these changes in patient blood samples. [more...](#)

Delivering Cancer Treatment on a Nanodisc Helps Eliminate Tumors

University of Michigan Rogel Cancer Center

In the wrestling match with cancer, chemoimmunotherapy is the new strong arm, and it is building muscle with a nanodisc disguised as good cholesterol. Researchers at the University of Michigan Rogel Cancer Center designed this new delivery system - a drug hidden in a nanodisc - to increase the number of patients who can be treated successfully with cancer immunotherapy drugs. The nanodisc is made of a synthetic version of high density lipoprotein (HDL), also known as "good cholesterol." Researchers attached doxorubicin, a widely used chemotherapy drug, to the nanodisc. [more...](#)



Telomerase-Expressing Liver Cells Regenerate the Organ

Stanford Cancer Institute

Liver stem cells that express high levels of telomerase, a protein often associated with resistance to aging, act in mice to regenerate the organ during normal cellular turnover or tissue damage, according to a study by researchers at the Stanford University School of Medicine. The cells are distributed throughout the liver's lobes, enabling it to quickly repair itself regardless of the location of the damage. Steven Artandi, MD, PhD, is senior author of the study. [more...](#)



Finasteride Can Reduce Prostate Cancer Risk Long Term

Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center

A drug used to treat enlarged prostate or hair loss in men has been shown to have a long-term protective effect against prostate cancer. The study, led by Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center biostatistician Joe Unger, PhD, linked data from a large prostate cancer clinical trial conducted by the clinical trial network SWOG with Medicare claims data to determine that the steroid tablet finasteride could protect men from developing the cancer for up to 16 years. [more...](#)



Experimental Arthritis Drug Prevents Stem Cell Transplant Complication

Sitman Cancer Center

An investigational drug in clinical trials for rheumatoid arthritis prevents a common, life-threatening side effect of stem cell transplants, new research from Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis shows. Studying mice, the researchers found the drug prevented what's known as graft-versus-host disease, a debilitating, sometimes lethal condition that develops when transplanted stem cells attack the body's

own organs or tissues. John F. DiPersio, MD, PhD, is senior author on the study. [more...](#)

Therapy After Surgical Removal of Rare Tumors May Not Increase Survival

University of Cincinnati Cancer Institute

Results of an analysis from the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine show that additional therapy, or adjuvant therapy, delivered after surgical removal of a rare type of gastrointestinal tumor does not increase survival rates for patients. The findings provide insight on treatment plans for patients with these types of tumors possibly eliminating the need for prescribed adjuvant therapy, preserving quality of life and saving money. [more...](#)

Drug Combination Targeting Heat Shock Protein 90 and BRAF is Safe, Effective in Advanced Melanoma

Moffitt Cancer Center

Patients with advanced or metastatic melanoma have been able to live longer cancer-free lives because of several new therapies approved over the last decade, such as BRAF and MEK inhibitors. However, despite the success of these targeted agents, most patients eventually develop drug resistance and their cancer regrows. A team of researchers at Moffitt Cancer Center have been working to learn more about how melanoma becomes resistant to BRAF inhibitors in order to develop new treatment strategies. [more...](#)



Genes Identified That Could Lead to Therapies for Cancers Caused by Epstein-Barr Virus

VCU Massey Cancer Center

VCU Massey Cancer Center researchers have identified two genes that are responsible for governing the replication of the Epstein-Barr virus, an infection that drives the growth of several types of cancer. The discovery could lead to the development of novel therapies for virus-associated diseases including stomach cancer and lymphomas. Renfeng Li, PhD, conducted the study. [more...](#)



Clinical Trial Begins with Drug Developed at IU

Indiana University Melvin & Bren Simon Cancer Center

Enrollment has begun at the IU Simon Cancer Center for a phase I clinical study of a drug designed to have an anti-cancer affect while protecting against chemotherapy-induced peripheral nerve damage, a common side effect when patients are exposed to certain types of chemotherapy. The clinical study is the outgrowth of nearly 30 years of research by Mark Kelley, PhD. [more...](#)

How A Cancer-Causing Virus Clings to Human DNA Like a Bur To A Sock

University of Virginia Cancer Center

Using a homemade, high-tech microscope, scientists at the University of Virginia School of Medicine have revealed how a cancer-causing virus anchors itself to our DNA. That discovery could pave the way for doctors to cure previously incurable diseases by flushing out viruses, including HPV and Epstein-Barr, that now permanently embed themselves in our cells. [more...](#)

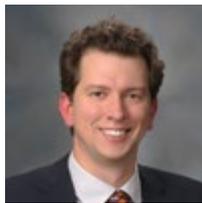


A New Test for Urothelial Cancers is Less Invasive, More Accurate

UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center

A new test for urothelial cancers could detect mutations in DNA that have been identified for those cancers earlier than traditional tests. Called UroSEEK, the test uses urine samples to seek out mutations in 11 genes that indicate the presence of DNA associated with bladder cancer or upper tract urothelial cancer. George Netto, MD, is one of the study leaders. [more...](#)

Study May Explain Why Some Triple-Negative Breast Cancers Resist Chemotherapy



University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center

Triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC) is an aggressive form of the disease accounting for 12 to 18 percent of breast cancers. It is a scary diagnosis, and even though chemotherapy can be effective as standard-of-care, many patients become resistant to treatment. Results from a study led by Nicholas Navin, PhD, indicate breast cancer cell resistance to chemotherapy may be pre-existing and the cells may even adapt to become resistant when confronted by the chemotherapy itself. [more...](#)

Machine Learning Finds Tumor Gene Variants, Drug Sensitivity in Cancer Genome Atlas
Abramson Cancer Center of the University of Pennsylvania

Matching unique genetic information from cancer patients' tumors with treatment options - an emerging area of precision medicine efforts - often fails to identify all patients who may respond to certain therapies. Other molecular information from patients may reveal these so-called "hidden responders," according to a Penn Medicine study. [more...](#)

Scientists Combine CRISPR, DNA Barcoding to Track Cancer Growth

Stanford Cancer Institute

Stanford scientists have found a way to modify pairs of cancer-related genes in the lungs of mice and then precisely track individual cells of the resulting tumor - a technique that could dramatically speed up cancer research and drug development. The work could finally allow scientists to mimic and then study the genetic diversity of cells found in tumors outside the lab. [more...](#)



Loss Of KDM6A, an X Chromosome-Encoded Tumor Suppressor, Was Found to Induce Squamous-Like and Metastatic Pancreatic Cancer

GW Cancer Center

Research published George Washington University (GW) Cancer Center researcher Alexandros Tzatsos, MD, PhD, found an important connection between the KDM6A gene and the most aggressive form of pancreatic cancer. The study found that the loss of KDM6A, an X chromosome-encoded histone demethylase, induces a histologically distinct subtype of pancreatic cancer, known as "squamous-like." [more...](#)

Drug Reduces Size of Some Lung Cancer Tumors, Relapse Rate After Surgery

Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center

A drug given to early stage lung cancer patients before they undergo surgery showed major tumor responses in the removed tumor and an increase in anti-tumor T-cells that remained after the tumor was removed, which resulted in fewer relapse cases in the patients. The research teams at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg-Kimmel Institute for Cancer Immunotherapy, the Johns Hopkins Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center and the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center wanted to find out if providing nivolumab, an anti-PD-1 drug, would stimulate anti-tumor immunity in patients with non-small-cell lung cancer who were going to have their tumors surgically removed. [more...](#)



Study: Double-Drug Strategy Blocks Escape Route for Most Lung Cancers

Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center, UT Southwestern Medical Center

A one-two combo punch using two currently available drugs could be an effective treatment for the majority of lung cancers, a study by scientists with UT Southwestern's Simmons Cancer Center shows. Researchers found that a combination of drugs - one targeting epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) and one targeting tumor necrosis factor (TNF) - effectively blocks the cancer from using TNF as an escape route. Using a mouse model, the researchers showed that when TNF is also blocked, the cancer becomes sensitive to EGFR treatment. Aamir Habib, MD, is senior author of the study. [more...](#)

Scientists Discover New Method for Measuring Cellular Age

Samuel Oschin Comprehensive Cancer Institute

A team led by scientists at Van Andel Research Institute (VARI) and Cedars-Sinai have developed a straightforward, computational way to measure cellular age, a feat that may lead to better, simpler screening and monitoring methods for cancer and other diseases. The findings reveal a progressive, measurable loss of specific chemical tags that regulate gene activity and are detectable at the earliest stages of development. [more...](#)

Chip-Based Blood Test for Multiple Myeloma Could Make Bone Biopsies Relic of the Past

The University of Kansas Cancer Center

A new University of Kansas research effort has resulted in a low-cost, reliable blood test that uses a small plastic chip about the size of a credit card that can deliver the same diagnostic information as a bone biopsy - but using a simple blood draw instead. For the last 10 years KU been developing a blood-based test for a variety of cancer diseases, including multiple myeloma, according to Steven Soper, PhD, who led the research. [more...](#)

Mathematical Modeling Offers New Way to Understand Responses to Targeted Therapy

Moffitt Cancer Center

Cancer therapies that target a specific protein have improved outcomes for patients. However, many patients eventually develop resistance to these targeted therapies and their cancer comes back. It is believed that differences among tumor cells, or heterogeneity, may contribute to this drug resistance. Moffitt Cancer Center researchers are using a unique approach by combining typical cell culture studies with mathematical modeling to determine how heterogeneity within a tumor and the surrounding tumor environment affect responses to targeted drug therapies. [more...](#)

Largest-Ever Study of Thyroid Cancer Genetics Finds New Mutations, Suggests Immunotherapy

University of Colorado Cancer Center

University of Colorado Cancer Center researchers recently completed the largest-ever study of thyroid cancer genetics, mining the data of 583 patient samples of advanced differentiated thyroid cancer and 196 anaplastic thyroid cancers. In addition to identification of specific genes that may drive these cancers and thus provide attractive targets for treatment, the researchers found that in several samples of advanced differentiated and anaplastic thyroid cancer (the most aggressive and dangerous forms of the disease), mechanisms meant to repair faulty DNA had been broken. These broken repair mechanisms led to a subset of thyroid cancers accumulating a high number of genetic alterations - and this "high mutation burden" is a marker recognized by the FDA to recommend treatment with anti-cancer immunotherapies. [more...](#)



New Drug Combo Improves Survival of Women with Rare Uterine Cancer

Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center

Adding the monoclonal antibody drug trastuzumab-already used to treat certain breast cancers-to the chemotherapy regimen of women with a rare form of uterine cancer lengthens the amount of time their tumors are kept from growing, according to Johns Hopkins Medicine researchers conducting a small phase II trial of the regimen, testing its safety and value. Amanda Fader, MD, is first author on the study. [more...](#)

Other News



Fred Hutch Leaders Help Shape President's Cancer Panel Recommendations

Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center

In a report to the White House, an independent advisory group called for "urgent action" to address rapidly rising prices for cancer drugs and the burden cancer patients and their families can face because of the high cost of cancer care. It issued six recommendations to ensure alignment of drug prices with their value, promote use of high-value drugs, and support innovation in cancer drug development. Gary Gilliland, MD, PhD,

president and director of Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, participated in workshops that led to the drafting of the report, and applauded the panel's efforts to keep the needs of patients as its central focus. [more...](#)



GW Director, Researchers Participate in AACR Meeting

GW Cancer Center

Researchers from the George Washington University (GW) Cancer Center participated at the American Association for Cancer Research Annual Meeting, April 14-18, in Chicago. At the meeting, Eduardo Sotomayor, MD, director of the GW Cancer Center, spoke at the AACR-MICR Distinguished Lectureship on "Finding a niche to develop a Translational Program: Mantle cell lymphoma as a model for translational science." Post-meeting, he began his role as a new member of the AACR Science Policy and Government Affairs Committee. [more...](#)

Job Opportunities

Assistant Director of Regulatory Affairs and Quality Assurance, Clinical Protocol Office

UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center [more...](#)

Director, Research Operations

UTHSC Mays Cancer Center [more...](#)

Clinical Research Manager

University of Florida Health Cancer Center[more...](#)

Meeting Announcements

10th Annual AACI CRI Meeting

Register today: aaci-cancer.org/cri_meeting

10th Annual AACI Clinical Research Initiative Meeting

July 11-12, 2018

Loews Chicago O'Hare Hotel

Rosemont, IL

Multidisciplinary Approaches to Cancer Symposium

September 20-23, 2018

Loews Coronado Bay Resort, 4000 Coronado Bay Road, Coronado, CA 92118

cme.cityofhope.org/eventinfo_9171

ASCO Research Community Forum 2018 Annual Meeting

September 23-24, 2018

DC Metro Area (Alexandria, VA)

For more information visit: www.asco.org/research-progress

This year's ASCO Research Community Forum (RCF) Annual Meeting, will be held on September 23-24, 2018 at ASCO headquarters just outside Washington DC. The meeting will feature a networking event, training workshop, general sessions, and discussions that provide concrete strategies to overcome common challenges associated with conducting clinical trials. Register today, space is limited.

Frontiers in Basic Immunology: 2018

September 27-28, 2018

Masur and Lipsett Auditorium, Bldg. 10, NIH, Bethesda, MD

ncifrederick.cancer.gov

The Center for Cancer Research at the National Cancer Institute is hosting a two-day national symposium entitled "Frontiers in Basic Immunology: 2018." The program includes recent advances in the field and should be an exciting forum for discussion and debate on the current understanding of basic immunological mechanisms.

2018 AACI/CCAF Annual Meeting

Register today: aaci-cancer.org/annual_meeting

September 30 - October 2, 2018

Loews Chicago Downtown Hotel
Chicago, IL

Neoplastic Hematopathology Update

November 8-10, 2018

The Waterfront Beach Resort, A Hilton Hotel

cme.cityofhope.org/eventinfo_9520