

# DirectConnect

Inside Yale Cancer Center

December 20, 2013

## Announcements

### Happy Holidays!

I hope you are all enjoying the holiday season with your families. I want to take a moment to thank each and every one of you for your commitment to our patients and their families and to Yale Cancer Center's mission. We have many successes to celebrate from 2013, including the re-designation of our NCI Comprehensive Cancer Center grant, renewal of our Commission on Cancer accreditation, continued increase in clinical trial accruals, and integration of new faculty and staff to our team. I look forward to continued successes in 2014 and sharing new accomplishments with you.

### Radiation Oncology Steps Up

A huge thank you to the faculty, nurses, and staff who have extended the patient care hours in Radiation Oncology over the last couple of weeks to accommodate the growing patient need. The clinic hours have expanded from 7 AM - 9 PM, and each of our physicians, nurses, and staff members have taken a share of the extra work to make sure our patients have the care they need, when they need it. Thank you for your extra efforts, especially during the busy holiday season.

### BMS Appointment

I would like to announce that this past week I was elected to the Board of Directors of Bristol-Myers Squibb, a global pharmaceutical company with a strong presence in cancer. This offers an opportunity to participate in many facets of cancer drug development. In early January I will be writing to members of the Cancer Center to more fully detail this role.

[Learn More >>](#)

## Notables

**Rick Lifton, MD, PhD**, a member of Yale Cancer Center's Genetics and Genomics Program, was named one of six winners of the 2014 Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences. This \$3 million prize was developed by Sergey Brin, Mark

*from the desk of*

**Thomas J. Lynch, Jr., MD**  
Director, Yale Cancer Center  
Physician-in-Chief Smilow Cancer  
Hospital at Yale-New Haven



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**closer to free**

The fund to advance cancer research and enhance patient care

Links of Interest

**CV Library**

The CV library is a new resource available to our members, with

Zuckerberg, Jack Ma, and Yuri Milner, together with their families, to honor the most accomplished life scientists.

[Learn More >>](#)

**Craig M. Crews, PhD**, a member of Yale Cancer Center's Developmental Therapeutics Program, has been named CURE Entrepreneur of the Year for founding two biotechnology startups in Connecticut based on discoveries made in his laboratories at Yale.

[Learn More>>](#)

**Rogério Lilenbaum, MD**, Chief Medical Officer of Smilow Cancer Hospital, has been named Editor of the Brazilian edition of the Journal of Clinical Oncology. Rogério will select appropriate articles from the US edition of the journal for inclusion in the Brazilian edition and oversee the quality of the translation.

**Bonnie Gould Rothberg, MD, PhD, MPH** has been awarded a 2014 Patterson Trust Award to support her research project, "Germline Genetic Variation in T2a-T4b Cutaneous Melanoma Prognosis." Her research will study, using Ion Torrent Next-Generation DNA sequencing, whether a genetic variation found within 100 genes already known to be important to melanoma growth can predict recurrence among 920 Stage II/IIIA melanoma patients who all received SLNB and clinical follow-up within the Yale Melanoma Unit from 1997-2012.

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## Research in the News

### Exercise Improves Joint Pain Caused by AI Breast Cancer Drugs

Breast cancer patients suffering from joint pain caused by certain medications may improve with regular, long-term physical exercise, according to a new Yale-led study. The findings were presented at the 2013 CTRC-AACR San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium.

The Yale team studied 121 post-menopausal women diagnosed with hormone receptor-positive breast cancer who were undergoing treatment with aromatase inhibitor (AI) drugs, which block estrogen production and activity. All reported experiencing at least mild joint pain, and many described their pain as the "worst" they had experienced. As many as half of all patients taking AIs experience joint pain and stiffness, known as arthralgia, and this is the most common reason they stop taking the drugs.

In the Yale-led study, 61 of the women engaged in twice-a-week supervised resistance training and were advised to increase their moderate intensity aerobic exercise to 2.5 hours a week, either at the gym or on their own. Their "worst pain"

CVs of post-docs and others looking for positions at Yale. Please browse the listings if you have openings, and send the CVs you receive to share.

[Learn More >>](#)

### In the News

Read recent articles featuring experts from Yale Cancer Center.

[Read More >>](#)

### Subscribe to Yale Cancer Center Answers on iTunes

Yale Cancer Center's weekly radio program on CT Public Radio is ranked number 2 in the world for cancer programs on iTunes. Subscribe to the show.

[Learn More >>](#)

### Yale Cancer Center Grand Rounds

Video presentations from Yale Cancer Center members are now available online.

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### DirectConnect Archives

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### ASCO Connection Blog

*Where do we go from here? Thoughts on Improving the Healthcare System*

[Read More >>](#)

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## Events

### December 20; 12:00 PM YCC Research in Progress Meeting

NP4-101A

*Next Generation Sequencing of Triple Negative Breast Cancer*

Lajos Pusztai, MD

[Learn More >>](#)

### December 22; 6:00 PM Yale Cancer Center Answers

WNPR

*Clinical Trials for Hematologic Malignancies*

Steven Gore, MD

[Learn More >>](#)

### December 29; 6:00 PM Yale Cancer Center Answers

WNPR

*Hematologic Malignancies Part*

scores decreased by as much as 30%, and overall joint pain severity also decreased significantly. The exercise also favorably impacted body weight and cardiorespiratory fitness.

[Read More >>](#)

### **Yale Team Uses Cells to Expand Nature's Repertoire**

Using a cell's own internal machinery, Yale researchers have produced proteins not found in nature that can cause cancer in mice, they reported Dec. 16 in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

The study not only sheds light on the way cancers may form, but also illustrates a new and efficient method to produce novel proteins that can be used for a variety of research, industrial, and medical purposes.

"This is a new class of biologically active proteins, which we found by simply expressing random amino acid sequences in cells and letting the cells find the active ones for us," said Dr. Daniel DiMaio, the Waldemar Von Zedtwitz Professor of Genetics, Deputy Director of Yale Cancer Center, and senior author of the study.

[Read More >>](#)

### **Toddler Treated for a Rare Form of Cancer**

An incredible outcome for an 18-month-old girl battling a rare form of liver cancer. Researchers used breakthrough genetic technology to help save her life. The toddler is from Turkey. Doctors there figured out she had a tumor in her liver. But, they were not able to identify it.

It was not until Yale doctors got involved did she finally get the right diagnosis and treatment. Dr. Murat Gunel using advanced genetic technology diagnosed Derin with a rare liver cancer, mapping out her genetic code to come up with a personalized cure.

"We were able to use very small tissue which is 1 mm x 3 mm," said Gunel. "We can take a cancer, pick up the genetic code, identify the genetic code, identify exactly what's wrong with that particular cancer, do a molecular diagnosis and decide which drugs we should give for that cancer."

[Watch Interview >>](#)

### **Clinical Cancer Advances 2013: ASCO's Annual Report on Progress Against Cancer**

Yale Cancer Center had two studies selected for inclusion in this year's ASCO Annual Report:

*"Survival and long-term follow-up of safety and response in patients (pts) with advanced melanoma (MEL) in a phase I trial of nivolumab (anti-PD-1; BMS-936558; ONO-4538)," Mario*

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Steven Gore, MD

[Learn More >>](#)

**January 5; 6:00 PM**

### **Yale Cancer Center Answers**

WNPR

*Colorectal Cancer*

Scott Kopetz, MD, PhD, FACP

[Learn More >>](#)

**January 7; 9:30 AM**

### **Pathology Research in Progress Talks**

BML 137

TBA

Jian Cao, PhD and

Jonathan Haskins

[Learn More >>](#)

**January 7; 12:00 PM**

### **Yale Cancer Center Grand Rounds**

Park Street Auditorium

TBA

Guy Maytal, MD

[Learn More >>](#)

**January 9; 3:00 PM**

### **Office of Cooperative Research Sponsors**

*Yale Entrepreneurial Institute*

*I-Corps Info Session*

[Learn More >>](#)

**January 10; 12:00 PM**

### **YCC Research in Progress Meeting**

NP4-101A

TBA

Sarah Goldberg, MD, MPH

[Learn More >>](#)

**January 10; 1:00 PM**

### **YCC Molecular Virology Research Program**

SHM I-116

*Oncolytic Viruses*

Tony Van den Pol, PhD

[Learn More >> \(PDF\)](#)

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## **Employment Opportunities**

We seek your assistance in the recruitment of qualified Oncology Research Nurses to join the Cancer Center for full time research opportunities. Positions traditionally require a minimum of BSN and 4 years of

Sznol, MD  
and

"*Genomic analysis of non-NF2 meningiomas reveals mutations in TRAF7, KLF4, AKT1, and SMO,*" Murat Günel, MD

[Read More >>](#)

### Science Magazine: Breakthrough of the Year: Immunotherapy

This year marks a turning point in cancer, as long-sought efforts to unleash the immune system against tumors are paying off—even if the future remains a question mark...

...Engineered T cells are still experimental, but the antibodies are slowly going mainstream. At least five major drug companies, their early hesitancy gone, are developing antibodies such as anti-PD-1. In 2011, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved Bristol-Myers Squibb's anti-CTLA-4 treatment, called ipilimumab, for metastatic melanoma. The cost is high: The company charges \$120,000 for a course of therapy. In 2012, Suzanne Topalian of Hopkins, **Mario Sznol** of Yale University, and their colleagues reported results for anti-PD-1 therapy in nearly 300 people, and they provided an update earlier this year. Tumors shrunk by about half or more in 31% of those with melanoma, 29% with kidney cancer, and 17% with lung cancer.

This year brought even more encouragement. Bristol-Myers Squibb reported this fall that of 1800 melanoma patients treated with ipilimumab, 22% were alive 3 years later. In June, researchers reported that combining ipilimumab and anti-PD-1 led to "deep and rapid tumor regression" in almost a third of melanoma patients. Drugs blocking the PD-1 pathway have not yet been proven to extend life, although survival rates so far have doctors optimistic that they do...

[Read the Entire Article >>](#)

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## Funding and Award Opportunities

### Avon Foundation Research Grant Program

Supports research projects aimed at understanding the causes of breast cancer, prevention or developing new tests to assess risk. Funds can also be requested to develop new treatments for unmet needs in breast cancer. Up to \$150,000 per year for 2 years. (\$300,000 maximum) An optional 3rd year can be sought during Year 2.

**Letter of Intent Deadline:** January 31, 2014

[Learn More >>](#)

### Basser External Research Grant Program

The Basser Research Center for BRCA at Penn Medicine's

research nursing experience with a strong preference within oncology. In lieu of research experience, trained oncology nurses with little or no research experience are considered for positions of the same level. Should you know of any potential candidates, please encourage them to go on-line to [www.yale.edu/jobs](http://www.yale.edu/jobs) and navigate to the STARS employment website in search of positions 18343BR and 18943BR, upload the resume and apply. They may also contact [Sandra Greer](#) for further information.

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### Submissions

Please submit your recent publication and grant announcements to:

#### Renee Gaudette

Director, Public Affairs and Marketing

[renee.gaudette@yale.edu](mailto:renee.gaudette@yale.edu)

 Forward to a Friend

Abramson Cancer Center announces the Bassler External Research Grant Program, which focuses on projects that have the potential to advance the care of individuals living with BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutations. Research grant applications in basic science, early detection, translational or clinical research and relevant to the study of BRCA1/2 will be considered.

Grants that demonstrate a potential for translation into clinical practice will be prioritized for funding.

- Bassler Team Science Award A \$1 million, two-year (\$500,000/yr), project will be awarded. The teams must have a minimum of two principal investigators and preference will be given to multi-institutional applications.

- Bassler Innovation Award Three \$100,000, one-year, high-risk idea projects will be awarded.

**Letter of Intent Deadline:** January 6, 2014

[Learn More >>](#)

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## Employee Profile: Molly Daley

*The Employee Profile recognizes the diverse contributions made by Yale Cancer Center and Smilow Cancer Hospital staff to meet our patient care, research, education, and outreach goals. The staff profiled are examples of the great work being done here, and the dedication and values we possess.*

*To suggest someone to be profiled, please contact*

*Emily Fenton.*

In the Yale Cancer Center Clinical Trials Office, Molly Daley serves as Project Manager for Hematology, which includes Lymphoma, Myeloma, and Leukemia. She oversees Phase I, II, and III Investigator initiated and industry sponsored clinical trials from start up to the closure of the study for eleven physicians. In her role she is responsible for ensuring study protocol compliance in regards to Federal regulations, Institutional Review Board (IRB) and University policies.



A large part of Molly's job includes supplying support and guidance to satellite sites for multi-center studies, including international sites. She provides administrative coordination between university and hospital departments in respect to contract, budget, regulatory, data, investigational product and clinical trial support. She also performs regulatory responsibilities that include FDA, sponsor and internal audits. Molly commented, "I especially enjoy the work I do with multi-site trials. It is wonderful to see and be a

part of that process and to know that patients are receiving the care that we work so hard to provide to them."

When Molly started she was the sole Project Manager for Hematology. There are now two Project Managers and Molly works on lymphoma and transplant studies.

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## Recent Publications

### **DNA Damage Tolerance and a Web of Connections with DNA Repair at Yale.**

Wood RD.

Yale J Biol Med. 2013 Dec 13;86(4):507-516.

[Read More >>](#)

### **Fanconi Anemia: A Signal Transduction and DNA Repair Pathway.**

Kupfer GM.

Yale J Biol Med. 2013 Dec 13;86(4):491-497.

[Read More >>](#)

### **BRCA2: One Small Step for DNA Repair, One Giant Protein Purified.**

Jensen RB.

Yale J Biol Med. 2013 Dec 13;86(4):479-489.

[Read More >>](#)

### **Cellular Roles of DNA Polymerase Beta.**

Ray S, Menezes MR, Senejani A, Sweasy JB.

Yale J Biol Med. 2013 Dec 13;86(4):463-469.

[Read More >>](#)

### **Hypoxia and DNA Repair.**

Glazer PM, Hegan DC, Lu Y, Czocho J, Scanlon SE.

Yale J Biol Med. 2013 Dec 13;86(4):443-451.

[Read More >>](#)

### **Prognostic factors for squamous cell cancer of the parotid gland: An analysis of 2,104 patients.**

Chen MM, Roman SA, Sosa JA, Judson BL.

Head Neck. 2013 Dec 13.

[Read More >>](#)

### **Targeted therapy in uterine serous carcinoma: an aggressive variant of endometrial cancer.**

Black JD, English DP, Roque DM, Santin AD.

Womens Health (Lond Engl). 2014 Jan;10(1):45-57.

[Read More >>](#)

### **Is the use of preoperative breast MRI resulting in more invasive breast cancer surgery?**

Killelea BK, Gross CP.

Womens Health (Lond Engl). 2014 Jan;10(1):1-3.

[Read More >>](#)

**Effect of exercise on metabolic syndrome variables in breast cancer survivors.**

Thomas GA, Alvarez-Reeves M, Lu L, Yu H, Irwin ML.  
Int J Endocrinol. 2013;2013:168797. doi:  
10.1155/2013/168797. Epub 2013 Nov 11.

[Read More >>](#)

**Comparative effectiveness research in radiation oncology: stereotactic radiosurgery, hypofractionation, and brachytherapy.**

Aneja S, Yu JB.  
Semin Radiat Oncol. 2014 Jan;24(1):35-42.

[Read More >>](#)

**Reducing Tobacco-Related Cancer Incidence and Mortality: Summary of an Institute of Medicine Workshop.**

Balogh EP, Dresler C, Fleury ME, Gritz ER, Kean TJ, Myers ML, Nass SJ, Nevidjon B, Toll BA, Warren GW, Herbst RS.  
Oncologist. 2013 Dec 4.

[Read More >>](#)

**Taxanes: their impact on gynecologic malignancy.**

Schwab CL, English DP, Roque DM, Santin AD.  
Anticancer Drugs. 2013 Dec 1.

[Read More >>](#)

**An overview of epigenetics in nursing.**

Clark AE, Adamian M, Taylor JY.  
Nurs Clin North Am. 2013 Dec;48(4):649-59. doi:  
10.1016/j.cnur.2013.08.004. Epub 2013 Nov 1.

[Read More >>](#)

**New possibilities and potential benefits for local control in locally recurrent pancreatic cancer.**

Lloyd S, Chang BW.  
J Gastrointest Oncol. 2013 Dec;4(4):340-2.

[Read More >>](#)