

# The Cancer Center Newsletter

2 ISSUE  
2010



More patient navigators from the American Cancer Society (ACS) : Standing, Jeffrey Nguyen, Director, Patient and Family Services, Eastern Division, ACS; Roseni Dobis, Anne Gorin, Patient Family Services Coordinator Eastern Division, ACS, Rob Ramirez; Sitting: Monica Camargo, Ione Hamilton, Consuelo Gomzalez, Soon Lee and Jessy Lau, MA, Director, Patients and Family Service of the Eastern Division Asian Initiatives Program of the ACS

## Inside this Issue:

- 2**  
What You Should Know About Melanoma
- 4**  
NYHQ Biographies  
Cancer Center Program Leadership
- 5**  
The MAGE Lung Cancer Vaccine Trial  
Recent Events

## May is Skin Cancer Prevention Month

As we say goodbye to winter and shed our heavy coats, we need to remember to use caution before we go outside. May is Melanoma and Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month.

*Continued on page 2*



A higher level of cancer care.  
Right here in Queens.

THE  
CANCER CENTER

member  
NewYork-Presbyterian  
Healthcare System  
affiliate: Weill Cornell Medical College

Dattatreyyudu Nori, M.D., F.A.C.R., F.A.C.R.O., Director of the Cancer Center, Chairman, Department of Radiation Oncology at NYHQ, and Professor and Radiation Oncologist in Chief at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, Weill Medical College of Cornell University.

# What You Should Know About Melanoma

## What is Melanoma?

Melanoma is characterized by the uncontrolled growth of pigment-producing cells. Melanomas may appear on the skin suddenly without warning, but also can develop on an existing mole.

## What Causes Melanoma?

Melanoma is caused by excessive exposure to the ultraviolet radiation of the sun. People who live close to the equator, where the sunlight is more intense, are more likely to develop melanoma than those in other regions. Other possible influences include genetic factors and immune system deficiencies.

## Who Gets Melanoma?

Melanoma can strike anyone. Caucasians are more likely to be diagnosed with melanoma than other races. However, even among Caucasians, certain individuals are at higher risk than others.

- You have a substantially increased risk of developing melanoma if you have many moles, large moles or atypical (unusual) moles.

- Your risk is increased if a blood relative has had melanoma.
- If you are a Caucasian with fair skin, your risk is higher than a Caucasian with olive skin.
- Redheads and blondes have a higher risk of developing melanoma.
- Blue or green eyes also increase your risk of developing melanoma.
- Your chances increase significantly if you've already had a previous melanoma, but also increase if you have had basal cell carcinoma or squamous cell carcinoma, the more common forms of skin cancer.

## What Does Melanoma Look Like?

Recognition of changes in the skin is the best way to detect early melanoma. If you have a changing mole, a new mole, or a mole that is different, see a dermatologist as soon as possible.

If you notice a mole on your skin, you should follow the simple ABCD rule which outlines the warning signs of melanoma:

NORMAL MOLE	MELANOMA	SIGN	CHARACTERISTIC
		Asymmetry	when half on the mole does not match the other half
		Border	when the border (edges) of the mole are ragged or irregular
		Color	when the color of the mole varies throughout
		Diameter	if the mole's diameter is larger than a pencil's eraser

## How Serious is it?

Despite the fact that the incidence of many common cancers is falling, the incidence of melanoma continues to rise significantly. It occurs at a rate faster than that of any of the seven most common cancers. Melanoma is the most common form of cancer for young adults (25–29 years of age). According to the American Cancer Society, more than 75 percent of all skin cancer deaths are from melanoma. One American dies from melanoma almost every hour (every 62 minutes).

## Can Melanoma be Prevented?

No cancer is completely preventable, but you can significantly reduce your risk with these simple acts:

- Keep in mind the sun is strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Wear clothing that's dark, tightly woven, or includes UV protection.
- Remember that UV rays bounce off sand, snow, concrete, and water.
- Apply a sunscreen with a SPF of 15 or higher whenever you're outdoors.
- To achieve adequate UV protection you should use products that provide broad spectrum protection, which means protection against both UVB and UVA rays.
- Reapply sunscreen after swimming, perspiring, and toweling off.
- Stay in the shade whenever possible.

## Can Melanoma be Cured?

When detected in its earliest stages, melanoma is highly curable. The average five-year survival rate for individuals whose melanoma is localized and has not spread beyond the outer layers of the skin is 99 percent. The staging of melanoma involves determining how thick the tumor is, how deeply it has penetrated into the skin, whether cancer cells have spread to nearby lymph nodes, and whether cancer cells have spread to other parts of the body.

Early detection is essential; there is a direct correlation between the thickness of the melanoma and survival rate. Dermatologists recommend a regular self-examination of the skin to detect changes in its appearance. Additionally, patients with risk factors should have a complete skin examination by a dermatologist annually. Anyone with a changing, suspicious or unusual mole or blemish should be examined as soon as possible. Individuals with a history of melanoma should have a full-body exam at least annually and perform monthly self-exams for new and changing moles.

Although most skin cancers can be treated successfully with the techniques available today, current research may lead to the development of even more effective forms of therapy. Some of the focuses of current research include the following:

### Targeted Therapies

Cancer cells differ from normal cells in many ways. The concept of targeted therapy involves detecting the difference between cancer cells and normal cells by targeting the specific genes or proteins that are involved in the initiation or growth of cancer. Designing targeted therapies is a very complex process, but it is also considered one of the most promising new approaches to the treatment of cancer, including skin cancer.

### Gene Therapy for Melanoma

One current area of research in melanoma treatment is gene therapy. This type of therapy involves adding specific genes to cancer cells to help fight the cancer. Clinical trials of gene therapy in human volunteers are now underway.

### Immune Therapy for Melanoma

Another important area of research in melanoma treatment is immune therapy. One approach that is currently being investigated is the development of vaccines that would make patients immune to their own melanoma cells. Another approach involves training the patient's immune system to recognize melanoma cells as abnormal and therefore fight the cancer more effectively.

If you are concerned about a possible melanoma on your skin, please contact the doctors at the New York Hospital Queens Physician Referral Line at 800-282-6684 and ask for dermatologist.

For more information about melanoma, visit the The American Cancer Society's website ([www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)). It provides an abundance of information about all types of cancer, including skin cancer. This site is especially useful for people who have just been diagnosed with cancer and want to know more about the type of cancer that they have and the ways that it is treated. However, the site also includes general information on the prevention and early detection of cancer that is suitable for everyone.

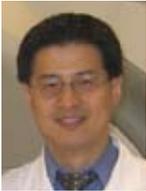
Additionally, one of the most detailed sources of cancer information on the Web is the U.S. National Cancer Institute web site ([www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)). Here you will find comprehensive information on both melanoma and other types of skin cancer, including information on prevention, genetics, causes, testing, treatment, clinical trials, research, and statistics.



**Amanda L. Kansler, M.P.H., Assistant Research Coordinator, Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery, NYHQ**

Amanda Kansler has joined NYHQ as an Assistant Research Coordinator. In her role, she will coordinate and manage multi-site investigational patient studies and clinical research activities in the Thoracic Surgery Division.

Before coming to NYHQ, Ms. Kansler worked for Doctors Without Borders. She has also held research related positions with the Valley Hospital in New Jersey and Weill Medical College of Cornell University. She received her Masters in Public Health degree from the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University. Ms. Kansler has been a co-author on several published papers.



**Baoqing Li, M.D., Ph.D., Attending Physician, Department of Radiation Oncology, NYHQ**

Dr. Baoqing Li will be joining the Department of Radiation Oncology in July. He will be full time at NYHQ. He is currently serving as the Chief Resident of Radiation Oncology at the

University of California Davis, School of Medicine. Dr. Li completed the required Internal Medicine internship for a Radiation Oncology Residency at Flushing Hospital, with an elective in Medical Oncology. His medical degree was from New York Medical College.

Prior to his medical training, Dr. Li received a Ph.D. from the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the University of Miami School of Medicine. He also received training as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Columbia University.

During his residency, he received the American Radium Society Young Oncologist Essay Award in 2010 and the American College of Radiation Oncology Resident Award in 2009. He has published several articles in the fields of Head and Neck malignancies, and Genitourinary malignancies. Dr. Li is a member of multiple oncology societies, including the American Society for Radiation Oncology, the American Association for Cancer Research, the American Radium Society, and the American College of Radiation Oncology.

Dr. Li is fluent in Mandarin and can converse in Cantonese.

## CANCER CENTER CLINICAL PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

### DIRECTOR

Dattatreya Nuri, M.D., F.A.C.R., F.A.C.R.O. 670-1501

### ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Mitchell Chorost, M.D. 670-1120

### BREAST CENTER

Karen Karsif, M.D. 670-1185

Susan Lee, M.D.

Margaret Chen, M.D.

### COLORECTAL SURGERY

Howard Tiszenkel, M.D. 445-0220

### GASTROINTESTINAL, MEDICAL

Moshe Rubin, M.D. 670-2559

### GYNECOLOGIC ONCOLOGY

Marie Welshinger, M.D. 670-1170

Manolis Tsatsas, M.D.

### HEAD AND NECK ONCOLOGY

Jerry Huo, M.D. 670-0006

### MEDICAL ONCOLOGY

Barry Kaplan, M.D., Ph.D. 460-2300

### NEUROSURGERY

Jaime Nieto, M.D. 670-1837

Murisiku Raifu, M.D.

### PALLIATIVE CARE

Simon Fink, M.D. 670-1120

### PULMONARY MEDICINE

Stephen Karbowitz, M.D. 670-1405

### RADIATION ONCOLOGY

Dattatreya Nuri, M.D. 670-1501

### RADIOLOGY

William Wolff, M.D. 670-1594

### SURGICAL ONCOLOGY

Mitchell Chorost, M.D. 670-1120

### SURGICAL PATHOLOGY

Michael Warhol, M.D. 670-1141

Stanley Kerpel, D.D.S., (Oral Pathology) 670-1520

### THORACIC SURGERY

Paul Lee, M.D. 670-2707

Subroto Paul, M.D.

### UROLOGY

Albert Tarasuk, M.D. 353-3710

### GENETIC COUNSELING

Kayon Williams, M.S. 670-2110

### NUTRITION

Jack Pasquale, M.D. 465-0041

Mary Grace Sucholet, R.D. 670-2550

### PAIN MANAGEMENT

Peter Silverberg, M.D. 670-1080

Vikas Varma, M.D. 460-1111

Ji Han, M.D. 460-2300

### SOCIAL SERVICE

Marlene Smike 670-1300

### CANCER RESEARCH

Engracio Cortes, M.D. 279-9101

Chu-Cheng Kan, Ph.D. 670-1724

### ADMINISTRATION

Maureen Buglino, R.N., M.P.H.,

*Vice President, Ambulatory Services* 670-1981

Tom Deutsch, M.P.H., M.B.A., *Administrative Director* 670-1501

Vijaya Malladi, C.T.R., *Manager* 670-1379

# The MAGE Lung Cancer Vaccine Trial

New York Hospital Queens' Thoracic Surgery Division is conducting a new research study, sponsored by GlaxoSmithKline, designed for people with early stage non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC).

Dr. Paul C. Lee, Vice Chairman, Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery and Chief of the Thoracic Surgery Division is the Principle Investigator and Dr. Subroto Paul, the Director of Minimally Invasive Lung Surgery, is a co-investigator.

The study is called MAGRIT and stands for MAGE-A3, as Adjuvant Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer ImmunoTherapy. MAGRIT is a large, international, double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled, Phase III clinical study looking at the safety and efficacy of MAGE-A3 ASCI in preventing non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) recurrence.

MAGE-A3 is an antigen that is present on the surface of cancer cells of approximately one in every three people with non-small cell lung cancer. ASCI (Antigen Specific Cancer Immunotherapeutic) is a new type of immunotherapy that combines this cancer-specific antigen (MAGE-A3) with an immune reaction booster and is administered intramuscularly as a vaccine over 13 visits.

Immunization with MAGE-A3 is intended to cause the body's immune system to attack cancer cells that produce MAGE-A3 thereby using the immune system to fight the recurrence of NSCLC cancer.

The MAGRIT study will involve approximately 400 clinical research study sites and 2,300 patients around the world over the next three years. It is open to patients with NSCLC with clinical stage 1B, 2 or 3A disease who have had their tumor successfully resected. Eligible patients will have their tumor screened for the MAGE-A3 protein and those patients who test positive are eligible to participate in the trial. For every two patients who receive MAGE-A3 ASCI, an additional patient will receive a placebo.

To learn more contact Amanda Kansler in the Division of Thoracic Surgery at 718-670-2621 or amk2004@nyp.org and visit the web at [www.ascitrials.com](http://www.ascitrials.com).

## UPDATES

**Dattatreyyudu Nori, M.D.**, Chairman, Radiation Oncology, was an invited Guest Speaker at the 19th Annual International HDR Brachytherapy Workshops and Prostate Cancer Symposium at Long Beach Memorial Medical Center affiliated with UCLA in February. The topics he presented on were "Principles and Practice Guidelines for HDR Gynecological Intracavitary Brachytherapy" and "Partial Breast Radiation with MammoSite HDR Brachytherapy". Dr. Nori was also the Keynote Speaker at the Association of Indian Physicians in the U.K. in May. He presented on "Treatment of Extremity Sarcoma With Function Preserving Resection and Brachytherapy". He was the Visiting Professor to the Dean's Hour at the University of West Virginia Medical Center. His topic of presentation was "Treatment of Extremity Sarcoma With Function Preserving Resection and Brachytherapy". Dr. Nori was also honored by New Jersey State Government Officials and the Commissioner on Health of New Jersey for Excellence in Medical Care in a function of the South Asian Heritage Society on Wednesday, May 19th.

**Paul Freedman, D.D.S.**, Director, Section of Oral Pathology, lectured on Oral Premalignant Lesions and Oral Cancer at the New Jersey Health Professional Development Institute on June 18, 2010.

**Kayon Williams, M.S.**, CGCK, Genetic Counselor, has been selected by the National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC) as a "Master Genetic Counselor" for an educational initiative which takes place this summer. The goal

of the project is to develop videos in which "Master Counselors" demonstrate, through mock patients, aspects of the genetic counseling process, for the education of genetic counseling students, genetic counselors and other health care professionals. Only 3 cancer genetic counselors were selected nationwide. Kayon Williams gave a lecture at Surgical Grand Rounds in February on "BRCA Referral Indications and Management".

On May 25th, the Queens Library, in conjunction with NYHQ hosted a Gastric Health Workshop geared towards the Asian community. **Kaumudi Somnay, M.D.**, Associate Program Director and Director of Clinical Research for the Gastrointestinal Division of the Department of Medicine and **Paul Lee, M.D.**, Vice Chairman, Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery and Chief of the Thoracic Surgery Division were the primary presenters. In addition, **Miranda Xu** and **Abigail Otero**, two patient navigators in the Gastrointestinal Division spoke to the audience and answered their questions. **The American Cancer Society** was present and distributed stool kits to those over age 50 who are uninsured.

A grant of \$515,000 has been delivered to New York Hospital Queens by the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York for the purchase of a new **Alpha 10 EUS**, a sophisticated endoscopic ultrasound system, for the Endoscopy Lab. The system is used to examine internal organs in the chest and abdomen and helps diagnose pancreatic, esophageal, rectal, gastric and lung cancer, as well as benign tumors.

## TUMOR BOARDS/PATIENT CARE CONFERENCES

The **Department of Radiation Oncology** has **New Patient Conferences** every Tuesday morning at 8 a.m.

**Breast Tumor Board** is held on the second and fourth Wednesday of every month from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. Lunch is served. Next upcoming dates are July 14 and 28.

**Thoracic Tumor Board** is on the third Wednesday of every month from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. Next date is July 21st.

**Gyn Tumor Board** is held on the first Wednesday of every month from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Next upcoming date is July 7th.

**General Tumor Board** is held every Tuesday from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. There is one Continuing Medical Education (CME) credit awarded per each Tumor Board meeting attended.

All the above noted professional educational programs are held in the **Anarena M. Anextis Conference Room** in the **Department of Radiation Oncology**. Refreshments are served.

## PATIENT SUPPORT GROUPS

The American Cancer Society sponsors a **“Man-to-Man”** program for **prostate cancer** patients, which is held on the second Wednesday of every month from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

The American Cancer Society sponsors a **“Look Good-Feel Better”** program for **female cancer patients undergoing Chemotherapy and Radiation Therapy** on the second Monday of every month from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. To register for the above two programs please call 1-800-ACS-2345.

The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society sponsors a **Caregivers Support Group** to address the unique needs of friends and relatives of those who care for others with any type of cancer diagnosis. It takes place on the first Wednesday of every month at 6 p.m. To register, please call 212-376-4772.

The above three programs are held in the **Anarena M. Anextis Conference Room** in the Department of Radiation Oncology at NYHQ.

## SMOKING CESSATION SUPPORT GROUP

Held the first Thursday of every month at 11 a.m. in the Anarena M. Anextis Conference Room in the Department of Radiation Oncology at NYHQ. For further information, contact the NYHQ Department of Health Outreach at 718-670-1211.

A higher level of cancer care.  
Right here in Queens.



THE  
CANCER CENTER

member  
NewYork-Presbyterian  
Healthcare System  
affiliated with Cornell Medical College



New York Hospital Queens  
56-45 Main Street, Flushing, NY 11355-5095

nyhq.org