

NEWSLETTER

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INAUGURAL CANCER SYMPOSIUM EDUCATES PUBLIC ON THE CANCER JOURNEY

The importance of exercise, a healthful diet, prayer/meditation and social support in the cancer journey were some of the take-away messages for participants attending UT Health San Antonio MD Anderson Cancer Center's inaugural "Living Without Cancer A-Z" symposium, held Saturday, Jan. 12.

More than 500 community members attended the free event that featured general morning presentations presented by cancer experts, afternoon discussions led by cancer physicians about specific types of cancer and five breakout sessions on support services and coping mechanisms important to the cancer journey. "We had a fantastic mix of attendees and the engagement of more than 60 faculty members

from our cancer center, including specialists from hematology/oncology, medical oncology, radiation oncology, medical physics, cancer surgical specialties and palliative medicine," said Ruben Mesa, M.D., FACP, director of the cancer center.

"We also had wonderful support and engagement from our colleagues at MD Anderson Cancer

**"ENGAGING WITH OUR
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SYMPOSIUM." – DR. MESA**

Center, who joined us for the afternoon disease-specific breakout sessions," he said.

Look for the general session presentations to be posted soon on the UT Health San Antonio MD Anderson website.

"This is so important because a cancer diagnosis can be devastating, but cure rates have been going up for most types of cancer. The more you learn about your type of cancer, the better prepared you will be for the journey. And by the journey I mean prevention, diagnosis, treatment, recovery and quality of life after cancer." Dr. Mesa said.

Here are a few highlights from the morning general sessions.

IMMUNOTHERAPY

Tyler Curiel, M.D., M.P.H., professor of medicine at UT Health San Antonio, discussed immune checkpoint inhibitors and upcoming new drugs in his presentation, "Immune System in Cancer." Checkpoint inhibitors are molecules on certain immune cells that help the body tell the difference between normal cells and cancerous cells.

Cancer cells have a way of tricking checkpoint inhibitors into spreading "fake news" to the body's cancer-fighting T-cells, convincing them that they do not need to fight cancer. However, CAR-T (Chimeric Antigen Receptor T-cell) therapy helps modify the patient's T-cells so that they recognize cancer as foreign and motivates them to fight the cancer.

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“CAR-T therapy is expensive, it doesn’t work for all patients, but theoretically could be the most successful class of cancer therapy ever developed,” Dr. Curiel mentioned. He said several new CAR-T therapies will be available in the next few years.

NUTRITION

In her presentation, “Nutrition/Recovery,” Laura Tenner, M.D., discussed common dietary misconceptions. Dr. Tenner is an assistant professor of hematology/oncology at UT Health San Antonio who specializes in colorectal cancer.

One misconception is that drinking alkaline water helps fight cancer. She said, “There is no evidence to support this because the body regulates the levels of acidity through the lungs and kidneys.”

Some people believe that hair dye can cause cancer. “There is a study of hair stylists and barbers that showed they had a higher incidence of bladder cancer, but there is no evidence that it causes cancer in the general public,” she said.

Exercise has shown to be a big deterrent in preventing cancer recurrence. “There have been more than 20 studies that show physical activity helps cancer survivors. Adults age 18 to 64 should strive for 150 minutes a week of moderate exercise or 75 minutes a week of vigorous activity,” said Dr. Tenner.

Evidence shows that vitamins supplements are unlikely to improve a person’s cancer prognosis or overall survival. “It’s better to get vitamins through the diet,” she said.

And the best evidence on diets, points to the Mediterranean diet, which focuses on vegetables, fruits and whole grains, and



includes more white meat and less red meat, whole fruit instead of juice and olive oil over other types of oil. Turmeric and cinnamon are spices that have been shown to deter cancer, she said.

“MIX OF SIX”

In their presentation, “Harnessing Lifestyle Change for Cancer Prevention & Control,” Lorenzo Cohen, Ph.D., and his wife, Alison Jefferies, M.Ed., delved deeper into personal choices that can “Make our bodies as inhospitable to cancer as possible.” Dr. Cohen is a professor in the Department of Palliative, Rehabilitation and Integrative Medicine at MD Anderson Cancer Center. Jefferies earned degrees in art history and education and has a master’s degree in educational psychology.

They focused on the “Mix of Six” factors that can decrease the likelihood of cancer: social support, stress management, sleep, physical activity, diet and the environment. Aging and obesity are the primary causes of cancer, they said. “Close to 80 percent of people in

the U.S. are obese, including one-third of children,” they said, which calls for making changes early in life.

Regarding social support they recommended avoiding negativity and finding friends who can provide support at different levels. They suggested people become a positive force. “With volunteering, you give of yourself to others. Research says that this reduces mortality by 22 percent,” Jefferies said.

“Stress speeds up the aging process,” Jefferies added. Cognitive Processing Therapy, yoga, meditation, humor, a healthy diet, exercise and good sleep help the telomeres, the tips of chromosomes that experts believe control the keys of aging and cancer, from becoming shorter, which preserves good health.

“Sleep drives metabolic clearance from the adult brain,” they said. “Good sleep hygiene includes exerting yourself physically during the day, being outside without sunglasses for at least 30 minutes a day and limiting napping to only 20 minutes,” they said, adding that a good night’s sleep is between seven and eight hours for adults.





[Click here for more photos.](#) The password to download photos is "Events."

"There is overwhelming evidence that exercise reduces cancer risk," they said. "Sit less and stand more for better cardiovascular health. Our children put their computers on an ironing board, so they can be raised and lowered."

For diet, they recommended skipping added sugar and refined carbohydrates; eat more vegetables (five vegetables to two fruits per day), and eat more beans, lentils, salmon, turkey and chicken.

"HOW NOT TO BE MY PATIENT"

In his humorous presentation, Edward Creagan, M.D., professor of oncology at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., encouraged people to choose foods from the Mediterranean diet, include prayer or meditation in their lives, exercise at least 30 minutes most days and surround themselves with friends.

"WE ARE NOT HERE BECAUSE WE HATE CANCER. WE ARE HERE BECAUSE WE LOVE LIFE!"

– DR. MESA

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF
New Agents
IN ONCOLOGY™

The UT Health School of Nursing and the Joe R. & Teresa Lozano Long School of Medicine invite you to the 20th annual Practical Applications of New Agents in Oncology on Feb. 1-2 at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center.

The Practical Application of New Agents in Oncology is a nationally recognized conference for healthcare professionals designed to provide the latest information on results of clinical studies of new anticancer agents and current treatment strategies.

Cancer experts from around the nation will be presenting at this conference on how to

use pharmacogenomics and personalized medicine approaches to help in the selection of novel new therapies for patients. Also, they will discuss how to incorporate these agents into standard clinical practice guiding the front-line clinicians, nurses, and pharmacists regarding current or projected appropriate use of these therapeutics.

The target audience for the conference is hematologists, medical oncologists, nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, pharmacists, students, and other health care professionals specializing in oncology.

The following continuing education is offered:

- Continuing Medical Education (CME)
- Maintenance of Certification (MOC)
- Continuing Nursing Education (CNE)
- Continuing Pharmacy Education (CPE)

Speakers from UT Health San Antonio include:

- Jeffrey Betcher, RPh, BCOP
- Elizabeth Bowhay-Carnes, MD
- Mathew J. Butler, MD
- Tyler Curiel, MD
- Tonya Edwards, MS, MSN, RN, FNP-C
- Guillermo Garcia-Manero, MD
- Virginia Kaklamani, MD, DSc
- Georgia McCann, MD
- Katherine Mishaw, MS, RN, AOCN
- Robert Orłowski, MD, PhD
- Ramesh Ramanathan, MD
- Chethan Ramamurthy, MD
- John Sarantopoulos, MD
- Robyn Scherber, MD, MPH
- Laura Tenner, MD, MPH
- Jeremy Viles, DNP, MBA, RN, Ne-BC
- Timothy Yap, MBBS, Ph.D., MRCP(UK), BSc (Hons), PgDip

[Click here to register.](#)

CONGRATULATIONS to the 2019 Presidential Award Winners



UT Health San Antonio President William L. Henrich, M.D., MACP, announced the 2019 Presidential Award winners Jan. 15. The recipients will be honored with a plaque and cash award at a special dinner on March 7.

Established in 1985, the Presidential Awards recognize exemplary performance by individuals who consistently excel in their positions and demonstrate a strong commitment to the mission and core values of UT Health San Antonio.

THE WINNERS INCLUDE:

Distinguished Senior Research Scholar

James D. Stockand, Ph.D., FAHA, FAPS, FASN, professor, Department of Cellular and Integrative Physiology, Long School of Medicine

Junior Research Scholars

Bess Frost, Ph.D., assistant professor, Department of Cell Systems and Anatomy, Long School of Medicine

Michael A. Liss, M.D., M.A.S., FACS, associate professor, Department of Urology, Long School of Medicine

Clinical Excellence

Glenn A. Halff, M.D., professor, Department of Surgery, Long School of Medicine

Teaching Excellence — Sustained

Bennett T. Amaechi, Ph.D., M.S., B.D.S., MFDSRCPS, FADI, professor, Department of Comprehensive Dentistry, School of Dentistry

Ricky Joseph, Ph.D., M.A.-H.R.M., OTR, assistant professor, Department of Occupational Therapy, School of Health Professions

Keith A. Krolick, Ph.D., professor/director, Integrated Biomedical Sciences Graduate Program, Department of Microbiology, Immunology and Molecular Genetics, Long School of Medicine

Rebekah J. Salt, Ph.D., RN, associate professor, Office of Faculty Excellence, School of Nursing

LuZhe Sun, Ph.D., professor, Department of Cell Systems and Anatomy, Long School of Medicine

Teaching Excellence — Emerging

Ameet S. Nagpal, M.D., M.S., M.Ed., associate professor, Department of Anesthesiology, Long School of Medicine

Ramaswamy Sharma, Ph.D., assistant professor, Department of Cell Systems and Anatomy, Long School of Medicine

Employee Excellence

Charlotte Anthony, M.A., marketing specialist – senior, Office of the Dean, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences

Antoinette R. Brundige, M.A., manager, Research Operations, Department of Psychiatry, Long School of Medicine

Karina Patino-Guzman, financial analyst, Office of the Vice President for Research

John Turner, M.Ed., director of Business Operations, Office of the Dean, School of Nursing

Stephanie M. Valdez, academic program coordinator, Department of Pediatrics, Long School of Medicine

Mia Veve, Ph.D., director of Student Counseling Center, Division of Academic, Faculty and Student Affairs

Team Excellence

MARC Radiology, Long School of Medicine

Angel Gomez-Cintrón, M.D., MARC Radiology Director

Mary Lou Jew, M.S., B.S., RT, Director, Radiology Services

Elizabeth Acosta, Scheduler Intermediate

Rosalyn F. Alli, Medical Office Receptionist

Carlo Ernesto A. Angeles, PET Technologist

Elena Balderaz, Benefit Coordinator

James L. Baxley, MRI Technologist Senior

Lamar E. Callier, CT Technologist

Tameka Collins, Ultrasound Technologist Senior

Gilbert Cortez, MRI Technologist

Edelia F. De La Cerda, MRI Technologist

Michael A. Escobedo, Radiologic Technologist Senior

Rudy C. Flores, Benefit Coordinator

Wendy M. Flores, Medical Office Receptionist Intermediate

Jennifer L. Garcia, Medical Office Receptionist Lead

Laura A. Garcia, Benefit Coordinator

Yvette Garza, Radiologic Technologist Lead

Christine L. Gonzales, Medical Office Receptionist

Victoria G. Huerta, Patient Transporter Senior

James G. Johnson, PET Technologist

Alvera Juarez, Benefit Coordinator Lead

Sierra Lee, Medical Office Receptionist Intermediate

Erica L. Loza, Scheduler Intermediate

Alicia Martinez, Registered Nurse

Claudia M. McLeish, Benefit Coordinator

Desiderio Medina, MRI Technologist

Christopher J. Page, Radiologic Technologist Senior

Linnette A. Pape, CT Technologist

Hillery L. Ramirez, Scheduler Intermediate

Liette Saunders, Patient Services Coordinator

Emily Tarin, Manager

Ana L. Vargas-Gonzales, CT Technologist

Rodolfo R. Vasquez, Radiologic Technologist Senior

Carolyn K. Williams, Benefit Coordinator

Yvette M. Wimberley, Radiologic Technologist Senior

Willie I. Yglesias, MRI Technologist