



iuscc research news

March 2009

Dr. Loehrer is named interim director of IUSCC

Patrick J. Loehrer Sr., MD, has been named interim director of the Indiana University Melvin and Bren Simon Cancer Center.

Dr. Loehrer, who was one of the original four medical oncologists at the Indiana University School of Medicine, will continue in his role as medical director of the IU Simon Cancer Center. He is an internationally recognized researcher and specialist in testicular cancer, gastrointestinal cancer, and thymoma.



Loehrer

Dr. Loehrer is the Kenneth Wiseman Professor of Medicine and director of the Division of Hematology-Oncology for the IU School of Medicine. For the past four years, he has served as deputy director at the IU Simon Cancer Center. For two decades, he served as the founding chair of the Hoosier Oncology Group, a statewide collaboration of academic and community oncologists that united for the purpose of conducting clinical trials in the community setting.

He is principal investigator at Indiana University for the Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group, one of the first and largest cooperative groups of researchers and health professionals focused on conducting multi-center cancer clinical trials. Dr. Loehrer has served on the board of directors of the American Board of Internal Medicine and was chair of the Medical Oncology Subcommittee. He was recently appointed to the Oncology Drug Advisory Committee of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Dr. Loehrer earned his medical degree from Rush Medical College in Chicago in 1978. He completed an internship and residency in internal medicine at Rush-Presbyterian St. Luke's Medical Center prior to completing his medical oncology fellowship at Indiana University.

Dr. Loehrer succeeds the late Stephen Williams, M.D., the founding director of the IU Simon Cancer Center, who died Feb. 15.

A national search is underway for a director of the IU Simon Cancer Center.



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Cancer Research Day abstracts due April 17

The IU Simon Cancer Center is now accepting abstracts for posters to be presented at Cancer Research Day on May 6.

Cancer Research Day

May 6, 2009

Scientific Poster Session

10 a.m.-1 p.m.
2nd floor atrium

Keynote Address

3-4 p.m.
auditorium (Room C203)

Kornelia Polyak, MD, PhD,
of Dana Farber Cancer
Institute presents "Breast
Tumor Evolution"

Awards Presentation

4-4:30 p.m.
auditorium (Room C203)

*all events take place in
Joseph E. Walther Hall
(R111)*

Abstracts should be submitted for basic science, translational/clinical, or population science/epidemiology categories. Individual laboratories may submit multiple abstracts; if space becomes limited, each laboratory will be asked to identify representative posters.

Cash awards for best posters by graduate students and by post-doctoral/medical fellows in all three research categories will be selected by a review board.

Please submit all abstracts to IUSCCCRD@iupui.edu by April 17. Access the abstract form, view the tentative agenda, and more at www.cancer.iu.edu/crd.

Students, fellows, and faculty conducting cancer research at IUPUI, Indiana University-Bloomington, Purdue University, and the Walther Cancer Research Center at the University of Notre Dame are eligible to present their current cancer research efforts at the event.

Cancer Research Day encourages collaboration among the cancer research institutions in the state.



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Core Spotlight

Angiogenesis and Endothelial Progenitor Cell Core

[The Angiogenesis and Endothelial Progenitor Cell Core](#) (AEPCC) conducts validated and highly reproducible *in vitro*

and *in vivo* angiogenesis assays. These assays function as experimental platforms for understanding the basic mechanisms of angiogenesis and discovering compounds that inhibit new blood vessel formation in tumor microenvironments.



Case

Located in the Cancer Research Institute, the core is under the direction of Jamie Case, PhD, who recently replaced David Ingram, MD. Dr. Ingram will become the section director of neonatal-perinatal medicine in the pediatrics department this fall.

Some of the core's services include:

In vitro assay systems in endothelial cell biology:

- endothelial cell isolation from human umbilical veins
- endothelial progenitor cell isolation from human umbilical cord blood (CB) and peripheral blood (PB)
- endothelial progenitor cell clonogenic assays
- endothelial cell proliferation assays
- endothelial cell migration assays

In vivo assay systems in endothelial cell biology:

- mouse matrigel plug model
- bone marrow contribution to tumor microenvironments, utilizing chimeric mice with green fluorescent protein-labeled bone marrow cells
- transplantation of human endothelial progenitor cells into immunodeficient mice

Overall, the core's advanced poly-chromatic flow cytometry (PFC) protocol may prove to be an inexpensive, rapid analytical tool to separate distinct cell populations, which could be used as biomarkers for many diseases.

For more information, contact [Jamie Case](#) or [Lucy Smiley](#) at 278-8249.



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News Briefs

Walther, IUSCC create new scholar program; applications due May 1

The Walther Cancer Foundation Inc., in collaboration with the Indiana University Melvin and Bren Simon Cancer Center, has established the Walther Clinical Research Scholar program. This program will provide support for junior translational clinical investigators to generate preliminary data fundamental for an R21 Quick Trial Grant or Translational/Clinical R01 application. Applications are due May 1.

more »

IU recognizes Dr. Walther's contributions; names RIII Joseph E. Walther Hall

Indiana University trustees have named the soon-to-open Research III in honor of Joseph E. Walther, MD. Dr. Walther was a prominent Indiana physician and a friend of the medical school. His foundation, the Walther Cancer Foundation, has contributed \$50 million to support cancer programs at IU over the past 20 years. Investigators will begin moving into Joseph E. Walther Hall the first week of April. The IU School of Medicine will formally salute Dr. Walther's support during the building's dedication on Oct. 8.

Nakshatri's breast cancer research is published

In the March 5 issue of *Expert Reviews in Molecular Medicine*, **Harikrishna Nakshatri**, BVSc., PhD, and colleagues wrote about FOXA1 in breast cancer. Breast cancer is a heterogeneous disease and classification is important for clinical management, Nakshatri wrote. At least five subtypes can be identified based on unique gene expression patterns. The transcription factor network composed of the oestrogen (estrogen) receptor α (ER α), FOXA1, and GATA3 may control the gene expression pattern in luminal subtype A breast cancers. Breast cancers that are dependent on this network correspond to well-differentiated and hormone-therapy-responsive tumors with good prognosis. Nakshatri and colleagues discussed the interplay between these transcription factors with a particular emphasis on FOXA1 structure and function, and its ability to control ER α function. The researchers also discussed modulators of FOXA1 function, ER α -FOXA1-GATA3 downstream targets, and potential therapeutic

agents that may increase differentiation through FOXA1.

Also, Dr. Nakshatri and colleagues wrote about a study in which they analyzed the effect of AKT on genome-wide ER alpha binding in MCF-7 breast cancer cells in the [December 2008 issue](#) of *Molecular and Cellular Biology*. Their results suggest a unique role of AKT in modulating estrogen signaling in ER alpha-positive breast cancers and highlights how extracellular signal activated kinases can change the landscape of transcription factor binding to the genome.

IUSCC members in the news

- **George Sledge Jr.**, MD, co-director of the breast cancer program at the IU Simon Cancer Center, recently received one of three Lifetime Achievement awards at the Indianapolis affiliate of the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Pink Tie Ball. In its fifth year, the Pink Tie Ball is a signature fundraiser of the Komen Indianapolis affiliate.
- **Sunil Badve**, MBBS, MD, FRCPath, has been appointed to the newly-formed 25-member Breast Cancer Steering Committee of the NCI. 
Badve
- The late **Stephen Williams**, MD, the founding director of the Indiana University Melvin and Bren Simon Cancer Center, was posthumously honored for his impact upon cancer patients. Dr. Williams won the top award in the "physician" category during the *Indianapolis Business Journal's* ninth annual Health Care Heroes award program March 4. The award honors a physician whose performance on the job is considered exemplary by patients and peers. Other finalists included Terry Horner, MD, of Indianapolis Neurosurgical Group and Richard Schreiner, MD, of Riley Hospital for Children. Dr. Williams died of cancer on Feb. 15. A tribute to him remains online [here](#).
- **Indra Das**, PhD, has been selected to be a fellow of the American College of Medical Physics (ACMP). The ACMP will present the award during its annual meeting in Virginia Beach, Va., in May.
- **Jeanne Schilder**, MD, is a recipient of the 2009 Trustees' Teaching Award, created by the IU Board of Trustees to emphasize IU's commitment to outstanding teaching.
- **Gabi Chiorean**, MD, and Peter O'Dwyer, professor of medicine at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and program leader of the Experimental Therapeutics Program at the University of Pennsylvania Abramson Cancer Center, lead a phase I study evaluating the safety of a new geranylgeranyltransferase inhibitor, GGTI-2418. GGTI-2418 is a synthetic peptidomimetic inhibitor of

geranylgeranyltransferase I (GGTase I) that induces apoptosis by downregulating several pivotal oncogenic and tumor survival pathways.

- Wade Clapp, MD**, is a recent recipient of a Clarian President's Values Leadership Award, a \$3,000 prize to further his development as a values leader. Clapp won the award, in part, for his work several years ago in which he treated a six-month-old girl who was suffering from neurofibromatosis who had developed a large tumor in her neck. Clapp and colleagues treated the girl with an experimental drug, which dramatically shrank the tumor. The girl is now living a normal life. The drug is currently in clinical trials.



Clapp

Wanted: Mentors for Summer Research Program

You are invited to serve as a faculty mentor for the 2009 [IU Simon Cancer Center Summer Research Program](#), June 1 - July 31. By placing students with faculty mentors, students gain insight into a wide-range of basic science, translational, and clinical research activities. Mentors facilitate and guide the students toward completing a research project, encourage students to explore the field of biomedical science, and provide students access to professional networks. Mentors receive \$500 toward the purchase of lab supplies for the student(s) and project(s). Questions? Contact [Rivienne Shedd-Steele](#) at 278-0073.

New members

Hyun-Suk Lim, PhD
Associate, unaligned member
Department of Biochemistry

Thomas Birdas, MD
Affiliate member
Department of Surgery

Naveen Manchanda, MD
Affiliate member
Division of Hematology/Oncology

New grants

David Flockhart, MD, PhD
"Mechanisms of Variability in Breast Cancer Therapies: Role of microRNAs in Hepatic Drug Metabolism"
U.S. Department of Defense

Reuben Kapur, PhD
"Role of Vav and Rac in KIT Oncogenesis"
NIH-National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Kenneth Nephew, PhD
"Transforming Growth Factor Beta

Yan Xu, PhD
"Critical Evaluation of LPCs Markers for Colorectal Cancer"
NIH-NCI

Feng-Chun Yang, MD, PhD
"Effects of Germline Mutations within the Ras Pathway on Bone Remodeling"
University of Utah

Signaling in Growth of Estrogen
Insensitive, Metastatic Bone
Lesions"
U.S. Department of Defense