

9th Indo Global Summit on **Cancer Therapy**

November 02-04, 2015 Hyderabad, India

Model of delivery of multidisciplinary cancer care in an academic cancer institution

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Organization and delivery of cancer care in a Medical College or University environment poses many challenges. There are more than 250 oncology units across India situated in medical colleges. Majority of these units have failed to grow beyond a Department of Radiotherapy, and remains devoid of multidisciplinary comprehensive cancer care which is quite desirable and feasible. Cancer Research Institute at Swami Rama Himalayan University, Dehradun has put up in place a computer aided functional system of mandatory tumor board approval and multi-disciplinary cancer care involving all disciplines required for optimal cancer care. Frequent communication within various disciplines and collective decision making and care is paramount to achieve the best out come with available therapies. This model represents a feasible and harmonious way of multidisciplinary working in academic institutions. Many others may adopt the same and benefit.

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Anticancer drug discovery: New approaches to cancer therapeutics

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Personalization is the key word in the current age whether it is an app, banking service or medicine. Drug discovery is employing new ways and methods exploiting systems biological, chemical biological, molecular biological, genetic information to meet that goal. Cancer, a disease of the genome is one where personalization is needed the most. Decades of cancer research in genomics, genetics and automation have translated in the successful drugs like Avastin, Gleevec, Herceptin and Tarceva. In addition to those mentioned various treatment modalities are constantly increasing. However; cancer still remains a high unmet medical need and many potential cancer targets remain non-drugged. Agents, be it small molecules or biologics that target the precise molecular pathology driving the progression of individual cancers are always being looked at. The wealth of genetic data generated by Cancer Genome Atlas, a NIH-funded venture compared the genomic fingerprints of tumor samples from nearly 3,300 patient population with 12 different types of cancer and have helped in identifying genetic signatures. Such efforts are accelerating processes in identifying key cellular pathways involved in cancer and is helping researchers identify prime targets for therapeutic development. The talk will focus on exploring and knowing what's emerging in the lead up to solving the paradigm of "personalized" medicine. Techniques that help us interconnect elements of the traditional linear progression from gene to drug, thereby providing a basis for increasing speed and success in cancer drug discovery.

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