

The SynCure Report – Fall 2007

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Translational Research Grants Awarded

SynCure has made two research grants to early career investigators at leading cancer research centers to help turn promising laboratory research into new cancer therapies. These winners for "Translational Research Grants for Young Investigators" were selected by SynCure's Scientific Advisory Committee among competing proposals from a select group of leading comprehensive cancer centers.

One grant will support the work of **Kimberly Stegmaier, M.D., Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at Harvard Medical School and Investigator at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute**

in Boston, Massachusetts. She not only conducts basic research but also teaches pediatric residents and pediatric hematology/oncology fellows, and provides clinical care for her pediatric patients with malignancies and disorders of the blood, including patients who have undergone bone marrow transplantation. Dr. Stegmaier will use the grant to support her search, using new gene expression fingerprint technologies, for new drugs to treat T-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia.



When told of winning the competition for one of the two grants, Dr. Stegmaier said, "There is a dire need for academic programs to lead drug discovery efforts for cancer, particularly for the more rare malignancies. My work addresses this challenge with the development and application of a gene expression-based approach to chemical screening for anti-cancer agents. Cutting-edge translational research is made possible by critical funding from programs such as SynCure."



A second competitively awarded grant will support the research of **Gabriela Chiosis, Ph.D., in the Department of Pharmacology and Chemistry at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC)** in New York City. Dr. Chiosis's research focuses on developing new drugs that target a specific molecule important to the progression of small cell lung cancer (SCLC). If this molecule can be successfully blocked

(inhibited), it may lead to much better treatments for this particularly aggressive form of cancer. Without treatment, the median survival time from a diagnosis of SCLC is only 2-4 months. One of the new drugs being investigated by Dr. Chiosis is in Phase 1 clinical trials and another is in late-stage preclinical development. "Because limited therapeutic options exist for relapsed SCLC and because SCLC tends to be very aggressive, spread quickly and be particularly lethal, there should be more impetus to find better and more rational therapies," said Dr. Chiosis. "Such efforts have been made possible through the generous research grant award of the SynCure Cancer Research Foundation. In addition, it fills an important gap in the precarious state of current funding available for medical research." Dr. Chiosis currently holds the Fredrick R. Adler Chair for Junior

Faculty at MSKCC and also is an Assistant Professor of Pharmacology at the Weill Graduate School of Medical Sciences, Cornell University.

"Coping with Cancer" Program a Great Success

On November 18, 2006 on the campus of Fairleigh Dickinson University in Hackensack, NJ, SynCure and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society hosted their first ever "**Coping with Cancer**" symposium to provide cancer patients/survivors and their loved ones not only information on the latest advances in cancer treatment, but also advice on how to deal with "psycho-social" effects of cancer. As one participant commented: "*What was most helpful for me was learning about the emotional aspect of cancer and that it is finally being recognized what a patient goes through.*" For more information visit our website and click on "**EDUCATION**" and then click on "**HACKENSACK, NJ 2006.**"

Cancer Education Programs Continue....

In addition to the Coping with Cancer program described above, SynCure has continued its highly acclaimed **UPDATE: Cancer Research and Treatment** and other educational symposia.

A new program titled "The Informed Cancer Patient" is scheduled for Englewood, NJ for Saturday, **November 3, 2007**, from 9 am to 1 pm. The program is co-hosted by the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and will feature speakers from the National Cancer Institute, Hackensack University Medical Center, Weill-Cornell Medical College, and Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center.

February 9, 2008, is the date for the 5th Annual **UPDATE** program at **Holy Cross Hospital in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida**. The first four years have seen attendances of 250-400 each; therefore, we expect another "sell out" crowd this coming year.

On March 15, 2008, **UPDATE** will be held for the 5th consecutive year in Tallahassee, Florida with the lead sponsorship of Tallahassee Memorial Hospital's Cancer Center.

Please check our website (www.syn cure.org) to register for any of the programs or you can call us at 1-866-SYN CURE to register.



The 3rd Annual PSS-SynCure Charity Golf and Tennis Tournament scheduled for fall 2008 in New Jersey will again honor Dr. Murray F. Brennan, former Chief of Surgery at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. Read more on page 3.

Research Grant made to Memorial Sloan-Kettering from 2nd Annual PSS-SynCure Charity Golf & Tennis Tournament



Steve Roman, Advisor to the SynCure Board, presented a research grant to Murray F. Brennan, MD, at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City from the proceeds of the Second Annual PSS-SynCure Charity Golf and Tennis Tournament held Monday, September 18, 2006,

at the Crestmont Country Club in West Orange, New Jersey. Dr. Brennan was honored at the Tournament for his extraordinary contributions in cancer research and treatment.

The 3rd Annual PSS-SynCure Charity Golf and Tennis Tournament will be held in the fall 2008, again at the Crestmont Country Club. As with the previous events, Mr. Dan Denenberg, Medical Sales Consultant, Physicians Sales & Service, Inc., will be the event organizer and host. Please check the SynCure website (www.syncure.org) for more details.

Training for a Cure



Matt Hanson, from Atlanta, Georgia had a goal of competing in Ironman competitions, and he also wanted to help raise money and awareness for cancer research. Matt had a unique idea—why not combine these goals? So, from January 8 to January 12, 2007, Matt rode a

bike fixed to a stationary trainer for 8 hours per day, for 5 consecutive days in order to raise money for the SynCure Cancer Research Foundation. The ride was done in public, on display at The Forum Fitness Center in Duluth Georgia. During his ride, Matt spent more time in the saddle than a Tour de France rider will spend in his saddle during any 5 consecutive days of Tour de France racing. Because of Matt Hanson's personal dedication and commitment to making a difference in the world, he raised over \$7,000 for SynCure to support its research and educational programs. This is an amazing achievement for a single individual and SynCure is deeply indebted to Matt for his efforts.

Support Cancer Research

SynCure Cancer Research Foundation is recognized by the U.S. government as a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit public charitable organization. All donations are fully tax-deductible (Federal ID Number 31-1574909). At least 95% of every dollar donated to SynCure goes directly into research and education initiatives.

The SynCure Spring Classic 2007 at Orvis Sandanona Shooting Grounds



The SynCure Cancer Research Foundation held their 4th Annual 'Spring Classic' sporting clays charity fun shoot on Sunday, April 22nd at the historic Sandanona Shooting Grounds in Millbrook, New York. Proceeds were donated to the SynCure-Murray F. Brennan, MD Research Fund at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in Manhattan. The day was devoted to the memory of Geoff Kerr, a renowned shotgun instructor and sporting clays expert, who succumbed to cancer in 2006. The 'sold-out' event attracted sporting clays shooters from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Michigan, Florida, Wyoming and Montana. Mr. John Gunn, Executive Vice President and CFO of Sloan-Kettering, discussed MSKCC's new research programs and the importance of SynCure's efforts in supporting those programs. Everyone had a terrific day in support of an important cause; the weather was superb, the food excellent, the targets and presentations first rate.

The Fall Blast 2007 Sporting Clays Charity Fun Shoot

The **Green Village Volunteer Fire Department** will be hosting its **THIRD ANNUAL** charity fun shoot in support of SynCure's life-saving cancer research and public educational programs. The event will be held Sunday, October 21, 2007, 8:30 am at Miele Field, Britten Road, Green Village (Chatham Township), New Jersey. Participation is limited to the first 80 shooters to register. For more information or to register contact Steve Roman at 973-808-1580 or by email at kobrom@rcn.com or visit the SynCure website (www.syncure.org).

I am pleased to donate \$ _____ in support of SynCure.

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SynCure Cancer Research Foundation
3216 Sessions Road, Suite 200
Tallahassee, Florida 32303

Selected Cancer Questions and Answers

IMPORTANT: The following information has been extracted from the National Cancer Institute and other sources. Always consult your personal physician for guidance in matters pertaining to your health and that of your family.

What is an “orphan” cancer?

An “orphan” cancer (or any “orphan” disease) is one that has not been “adopted” by the pharmaceutical industry because it provides little financial incentive for the private sector to develop and market new medications to treat or prevent it. An orphan disease is one that affects fewer than 200,000 people; there are more than 5,000 such rare disorders.); or 2. **common but ignored** by pharmaceutical companies (such as cholera, typhoid, and malaria) because it is far more prevalent in developing countries than in the developed world.

The U.S. Orphan Drug Act of 1983 offered tax incentives on clinical trials and 7 years of marketing exclusivity for drugs developed for conditions that occur only rarely in the US. Since then, more than 200 orphan drugs have been approved by the US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) and are on the market. *(Excerpted from MedicineNet.com at www.medterms.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=11418)*

Can a cancer diagnosis contribute to depression?

Depression is a disabling illness that affects about 15% to 25% of cancer patients regardless of gender. People who face a diagnosis of cancer will experience different levels of stress and emotional upset, caused by such factors as:

- Fear of death.
- Interruption of life plans.
- Changes in body image and self-esteem.
- Changes in social role and lifestyle.
- Money and legal concerns.

Everyone who is diagnosed with cancer will react to these issues in different ways and may not experience serious depression or anxiety. Just as patients need to be evaluated for depression throughout their treatment, so do family caregivers. Caregivers have been found to experience an increased level of anxiety and depression. Children are also affected when a parent with cancer develops depression.

All people will experience reactions of sadness and grief periodically throughout diagnosis, treatment, and survival of cancer. When people find out they have cancer, they often have feelings of disbelief, denial or despair. They may also experience difficulty sleeping, loss of appetite, and a preoccupation with worries about the future. These symptoms and fears usually lessen as a person adjusts to the diagnosis. Signs that a person has adjusted to the diagnosis include an ability to maintain active involvement in daily life activities, and an ability to continue functioning as spouse, parent, employee, or other roles by incorporating treatment into his or her schedule.

Even patients without obvious symptoms of depression may benefit from counseling; however, when symptoms are intense and long-lasting, or when they keep coming back, more intensive treatment is important. (For more information see <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/pdq/supportivecare/depression/Patient/page1>).

Why is cancer now often talked about as a “chronic” disease?

In the U.S., the lifetime risk of developing cancer is now about 1 in 2 for men, and 1 in 3 for women, with the risks varying by lifestyle (e.g. smoking) and other social-economic factors and increasing with age. However, a cancer diagnosis is not necessarily a death sentence, since about two-thirds of those diagnosed with cancer are alive after 5 years. Many persons who develop cancer lead long and active lives and die from other causes. It is estimated there are now over 10 million cancer survivors in the U.S., up from about 3 million in 1971. This increase in survivorship is usually attributed to:

- Earlier detection
- New and more effective therapies, often including multimodal and multi-agent combinations
- More effective preventative therapies
- Better supportive care
- Growing attention to long-term surveillance

Unfortunately, being cancer free does not mean being free of disease! Cancer can (and often does) affect many aspects of an individual's life. Some of these effects are acute or short-term (hair loss, anemia, nausea); others are more persistent (fatigue, sexual dysfunction, pain syndromes); still others may be late (osteoporosis) and potentially life-threatening (e.g. second malignancies, cardiovascular disease). The cancer survivor's health care needs are forever altered and their special needs have only recently begun to be addressed in a systematic way. All cancer survivors should have a follow-up care plan. Some common questions are:

- Should I tell the doctor about symptoms that worry me?
- Which doctors should I see after treatment?
- How often should I see my doctor?
- What tests do I need?
- What can be done to relieve pain, fatigue, or other problems after treatment?
- How long will it take for me to recover and feel more like myself?
- Is there anything I can or should be doing to keep cancer from coming back?

Coping with these issues can be a challenge. Being an active partner with your doctor and getting help from other members of your health care team is the first step. (See, for example, <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/life-after-treatment>).