

Gynecologic Cancers: Robotic Surgery, Intraperitoneal Chemotherapy Improve Outcomes *(continued)*

Intraperitoneal Chemotherapy

In early 2006, a major step forward was realized in the treatment of patients with advanced ovarian cancer, when the *New England Journal of Medicine* published a new study on intraperitoneal (IP) chemotherapy, known as the Armstrong trial. Results of this seven-year investigation showed that IP chemo improved survival by 16 months when added to standard intravenous chemotherapy. This 25 percent increase was enough to trigger a clinical announcement by the National Cancer Institute; since then, many institutions have adopted the IP plus IV chemotherapy strategy as standard practice.

The effectiveness of IP administration is likely due to the longer half-lives and higher concentrations of platinum and taxane drugs achievable in the peritoneal cavity; for example, administering cisplatin via the IP route increases exposure of the residual cancer to the drug by a factor of 10- to 20-fold, compared with IV administration.

Not all patients are candidates for IP chemo, including those with adhesions or surgical complications, poor kidney function, and patients who have had the left side of the colon removed during surgery. It is not yet clear whether the procedure also benefits patients with recurrent disease or patients with large amounts of residual disease after surgery. Again, to gain the increased survival benefit, aggressive and effective debulking is required, which can best be achieved by an experienced gynecologic oncologist.

Patient Care is Key

Delivering chemotherapy drugs via the IP route is not without drawbacks, primarily due to the toxicity of cisplatin and taxol. In the Armstrong study, side effects including suppressed blood counts and neurological problems were significantly worse for patients receiving IP chemotherapy. Patients also reported poorer quality of life during their treatment, although the investigators stated that a year after treatment, patients in the IP group were on par with those who received intravenous chemo only.

In administering a relatively complex chemotherapy regimen, the protocol must be followed carefully to achieve results similar to the study group. Where some institutions have adopted the practice of delivering the chemotherapy as an outpatient procedure and further modifying it with lower doses to reduce side effects. Our experience at City of Hope indicates that the best results are obtained in an inpatient setting, using the standard dose levels per the protocol. Toxicity problems can be ameliorated and optimal outcomes achieved when a high level of overall care is provided, particularly by oncology nurses experienced in the protocol.

Referring Patients to City of Hope

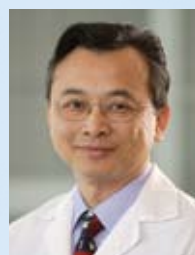
Physicians who have reason to believe a patient may have a gynecologic cancer or a serious benign gynecologic condition should contact the Division of Surgery at 626-471-7100 or search our Clinical Trials Online database for appropriate studies at <http://clinicaltrials.coh.org/>. ■

Research Progress

As a National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, City of Hope is known for advanced cancer research and patient care. Multiple clinical trials are ongoing (see listing below), including an investigation of abraxane, an alternative to taxol with reduced side effects. We are also actively testing new treatments for recurrent disease. Our access to patients and tissue samples also supports valuable translational research which is essential in advancing new therapies.

Recently, City of Hope received a major gift from Tony and Sue Markel to create the Markel-Friedman Peritoneal Ovarian Cancer Research Fund. Current projects include an investigation led by Robert J. Morgan Jr., M.D., to assess whether the protein HMGA2 is a reliable marker that can indicate which patients will benefit from platinum-based chemotherapy versus those whose cancer will resist treatment. Richard Jove, Ph.D., is leading a team of biologists and chemists to target STAT3, a protein associated with disease progression in ovarian cancer known to confer chemotherapy resistance. The extensive preclinical study will support the rapid translation of a new STAT3 inhibitor from the laboratory to the clinic. A third study led by Jeffrey Weitzel, M.D., seeks to “personalize” therapy for ovarian cancer based on the patient’s genotype, potentially improving clinical response and decreasing potential toxicities. ■

STAFF NEWS AND NOTES



Yi-Jen Chen, M.D., Ph.D.

*Clinical Assistant Professor, Radiation Oncology
Radiation Oncologist, Division of Radiation Oncology*

Yi-Chen Chen, M.D., Ph.D., has been a member of the Radiation Oncology team at City of Hope since October 2002. His clinical expertise and interests involve high-dose rate brachytherapy for gynecologic cancers as well as intensity modulated radiation therapy and helical TomoTherapy. He is certified by the American Board of Radiology — Therapeutic Radiology.



Mihaela C. Cristea, M.D.

Assistant Professor, Division of Medical Oncology

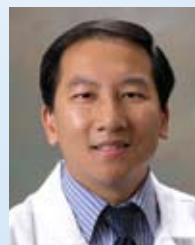
Mihaela C. Cristea, M.D., has been an assistant professor in the Division of Medical Oncology since 2005. Her research and clinical interests include lung and ovarian cancer. Cristea serves as the principal investigator on a clinical protocol on the phase I trial of intraperitoneal nab-paclitaxel (Abraxane) in the treatment of advanced malignancies primarily confined to the peritoneal cavity. This study is supported by the National Comprehensive Cancer Network. She is a member of the American Society of Clinical Oncology. She received her degree from University of Medicine and Pharmacy, in Romania.



Ernest S. Han, M.D., Ph.D.

*Assistant Professor, Department of Gynecologic
Oncology and Division of Surgery*

Ernest S. Han, M.D., Ph.D., joined City of Hope in August 2008. Prior to that, he was a fellow at University of California, Irvine. He is board certified in obstetrics and gynecology. Most recently he was honored as a Top 100 Reviewer for *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* and was an invited lecturer at the 7th International Congress on Monoclonal Antibodies in Cancer in Quebec, Canada. He is currently a fellow-in-training member, Society of Gynecologic Oncologists and an associate member, American Society of Clinical Oncologists.



Paul Lin, M.D.

Associate Professor, Division of Surgery

Paul S. Lin, M.D., focuses on treating women with ovarian and uterine cancers. Lin also performs research in new surgical treatments for gynecologic cancers, as well as cancer screening and risk assessment for women. He received his medical degree from the University of Mississippi, School of Medicine in 1990. Lin completed an internship and residency in the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences at the University of California, San Francisco, and completed a fellowship in gynecologic oncology at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston.



Lucille A. Leong, M.D.

*Associate Director for Clinical Affairs, Division of Medical
Oncology & Therapeutics Research*

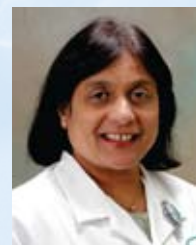
Lucille A. Leong, M.D., has been involved with dozens of solid tumor clinical trials, from breast cancer to colon cancer, from adjuvant therapy for early disease to novel treatments for metastatic women’s cancers to quality-of-life studies. She has been involved in the early intraperitoneal chemotherapy trials for gynecologic cancers for more than 20 years. Additionally, Leong serves as a coordinator for City of Hope’s Medical Oncology Fellowship and is a coordinator and advisory board member for City of Hope’s Clinical Cancer Genetics Program. Leong earned her medical degree from the Stanford University School of Medicine. Prior to joining City of Hope, she performed her internship, residency and hematology fellowship at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center. She has authored or co-authored more than 60 peer-reviewed publications and more than 100 abstracts.



Sharon Wilczynski, M.D., Ph.D.

*Director, Anatomic Pathology
Member, City of Hope Comprehensive Cancer Center*

Sharon P. Wilczynski, M.D., Ph.D., is involved in multiple investigations studying genetic causes and potential treatments for cervical, endometrial and ovarian cancers, with particular emphasis on the role of human papillomaviruses (HPVs) in the etiology of cervical and other cancers. Her studies are funded by the National Institutes of Health, the California Cancer Research Program and the Southwest Oncology Group. Also, she serves as chair of the Gynecologic Pathology Subcommittee for the Southwest Oncology Group, and is a member of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network Committee for Determining Practice Guidelines for Cervical Cancer Screening.



Nayana L. Vora, M.D.

*Clinical Professor, Radiation Oncology
Radiation Oncologist, Division of Radiation Oncology*

Nayana L. Vora, M.D., is in charge of the Interstitial Brachytherapy Program for head and neck and gynecologic cancers. Vora holds a bachelor’s degree and medical degree from R.J. College in Bombay, India. She also completed an internship at K.E.M. Hospital in Bombay, India; residencies at Ohio State University Hospital and Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto, Ontario; and a fellowship at Los Angeles County+ USC Medical Center.

To reach any department at City of Hope, please call **626-256-HOPE (4673)** and enter the extension indicated below.

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CLINICAL TRIALS

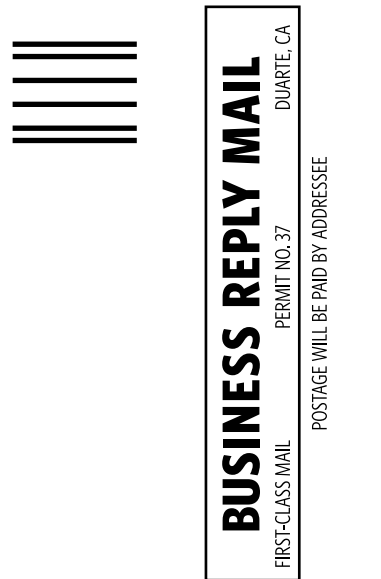
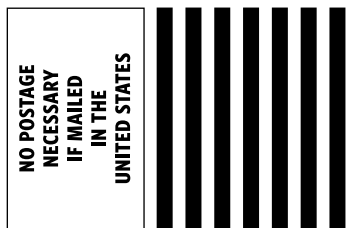
Ovarian	Cervical and/or Endometrial
03092 Randomized Pilot Trial of Oral Cyclophosphamide versus Oral Cyclophosphamide with Celecoxib for Recurrent or Persistent Epithelial Ovarian, Fallopian Tube or Primary Peritoneal Cancer <i>Principal Investigator: Vincent Chung, M.D.</i>	07142 The Effects of Cultural Health Beliefs, Health Behaviors and Health Related Quality of Life on Cancer Survival Among Multiethnic Breast and Cervical Cancer Survivors <i>Principal Investigator: Kimlin Ashing-Giwa, Ph.D.</i>
03032 Ovarian Cancer and Quality of Life Intervention <i>Principal Investigator: Betty Ferrell, Ph.D.</i>	06160 RTOG 0418: A Phase II Study of Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy (IMRT) to the Pelvis +/- Chemotherapy for Postoperative Patients with Either Endometrial or Cervical Carcinoma <i>Principal Investigator: Nayana Vora, M.D.</i>
	06081 Cervical Cancer Survivorship among African American and Latina Survivors <i>Principal Investigator: Kimlin Ashing-Giwa, Ph.D.</i>



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