Young Investigators Present Research at Fall Group Meeting

The 13th annual ECOG-ACRIN Young Investigator Symposium took place at the ECOG-ACRIN Cancer Research Fall 2013 Group Meeting at the Westin Diplomat Resort & Spa in Hollywood, FL. The symposium, a professional mentoring event, recognizes promising young translational scientists and clinical investigators and exposes them to cooperative group research opportunities early in their careers.

This year, the symposium selection committee chose seven people to give oral presentations describing their research, followed by a question and answer session with attendees. The investigators brought interesting ideas and novel scientific approaches from across a variety of therapeutic and diagnostic imaging disciplines to the attention of the ECOG-ACRIN community. Four of the investigators are medical oncologists; other specialties represented include imaging biomarkers, pulmonary and critical care medicine, and medical social sciences/clinical health psychology.

The investigators also observed scientific committee meetings, participated in educational sessions for clinical trial professionals, and networked one-on-one with attendees. Like the question and answer session, the young investigators found these interactions to be of value, given the broad experience of ECOG-ACRIN members across therapeutic and diagnostic disciplines.

It is a tradition of the symposium to honor two individuals with awards of distinction for outstanding presentations. This year’s awardees—Jae H. Park, MD, and Despina Kontos, PhD—were announced and recognized at the General Session.

Dr. Park received an award of distinction for clinical research. He discussed a phase II study of the BRAF inhibitor vemurafenib, currently seeking to recruit 36 patients at his home institution, the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, New York, NY, and selected other sites.

Dr. Kontos received an award of distinction for translational science. She explained the development of an imaging methodology capable of identifying women at high risk of false-positive screening mammography due to breast tissue complexity.

Visit the Mentorship section of the website for information about the upcoming 2014 symposium.

Recipient of an Award of Distinction for Clinical Research
Jae H. Park, MD
Assistant Attending, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center
Research: A phase II trial of the BRAF inhibitor vemurafenib in patients with BRAF-mutant relapsed or refractory hairy cell leukemia: (NCT01711632).

Recipient of an Award of Distinction for Translational Science
Despina Kontos, PhD
Assistant Professor, University of Pennsylvania
Research: Prediction of false-positive recall from screening mammography in the ACRIN 4006 trial using computer-extracted breast tissue complexity features.

Adam D. Cohen, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania
Research: A phase II trial of the BRAF inhibitor vemurafenib in patients with BRAF-mutant relapsed or refractory hairy cell leukemia: (NCT01711632).

Murali Janakiram, MD
Clinical and Research Fellow, Montefiore Medical Center
Research: The prognostic significance of the B7 ligands in triple-negative breast cancer.

Tobias Peikert, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine, Mayo Clinic Rochester
Research: Noninvasive characterization of pulmonary nodules of the lung adenocarcinoma spectrum.

John M. Salsman, PhD
Research Assistant Professor, Northwestern University
Research: Fertility preservation for young adults with cancer; examining compliance with treatment guidelines at a comprehensive cancer center.

Kari B. Wisinski, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine, University of Wisconsin
Research: Cytochrome P450 interacting medication use in adults with advanced solid tumors and a framework for standardizing assessment of drug interactions in clinical trials with investigational anticancer agents.