March 2019 News

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UACC Updates

New Website Launch

We are excited to announce the launch of the new University of Arizona Cancer Center website!

The updated website includes a simpler navigation for our users, along with a look and feel that is branded and consistent with the University of Arizona community.

Cancer Center Website
When physician-scientist Rachna Shroff, MD, joined the University of Arizona Cancer Center last year as the new section chief of gastrointestinal medical oncology and leader of the GI Disease-Oriented Team, she set her sights on expanding clinical trials, which give patients access to experimental drugs with the hope of ushering in safer, more effective treatments.

“We’re bringing in new and novel ideas, filling holes to make sure we have trials for all of our patients,” Dr. Shroff said. “Our goal is to have a clinical trial for every single patient who comes in.”

Just last month, Dr. Shroff opened a national Phase III study through the Southwest Oncology Group (SWOG) investigating nab-paclitaxel in biliary tract cancer — the first of its kind in North America. Biliary tract cancer arises in the bile duct, a series of tubes that connect the liver to the small intestine.

“It’s a pivotal, potentially practice-changing study,” Dr. Shroff said. “Historically in this country, newly diagnosed biliary cancer patients have not had clinical trial options.”
The University of Arizona Cancer Center performed experiments indicating that a triple-combination therapy might significantly boost the immune system’s ability to fight cancer and improve patient survival. In partnership with researchers at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC), the team published its results online in Clinical Cancer Research.

The group focused on a protein called PIM kinase, which under normal circumstances is integral for cell growth, but can go awry to cause cancer. Their experiments suggested that, when combined with two types of immunotherapy treatments, a drug that “blocks” PIM kinase could help extend immune memory, enabling a longer-lasting immune response.

“The focus on PIM came out of my laboratory,” said Andrew S. Kraft, MD, director of the UA Cancer Center. “PIM kinase is an important target in cancer. This collaborative work shows that inhibiting this enzyme can greatly enhance immunotherapy and impact cancer.”

Pink the Rink
The University of Arizona hockey team hosted its annual “Pink the Rink” cancer-awareness game **Saturday, Jan. 19**, when the Wildcats donned pink jerseys honoring individuals who have suffered from cancer, during their game against the University of Central Oklahoma.

The event was successful and raised $9,500 for cancer research.

**Watch Promo Video**

**UACC On the Air and On the Web**

Dr. Jue Wang was featured in an article by U.S. News on Feb. 21, about kidney cancer symptoms and treatments. [Read more.](#)

On March 8, KGUN9 featured a story on pancreatic cancer following Alex Trebek’s announcement. Dr. Rachna Shroff provided insight on the cancer. [See the video here.](#)

**Visit our new website!**

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