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Satellite treatment center provides options

M. D. Anderson extends radiation expertise to local communities

For many cancer patients, radiation therapy signifies both a daily routine and hope for the future. Patients depend on M. D. Anderson Cancer Center to provide the highest caliber of radiation treatment.

Now, with the M. D. Anderson Cancer Center Radiation Treatment Center at Bellaire, M. D. Anderson extends its signature standard of excellence in radiation therapy and patient care beyond the Texas Medical Center directly into the Houston community.

Located fewer than 10 miles from the main cancer center, the 5,000-square-foot center is the first satellite facility for M. D. Anderson's radiation therapy service. Patients not only receive M. D. Anderson's brand of compassionate patient care and radiation treatment expertise, but also experience the convenience of easy access, appointment scheduling and complimentary parking.

All staff members at the satellite center have trained at M. D. Anderson. The center's team features a complete staff that includes radiation therapists, dosimetrists, registered nurses, medical physicists, social workers and patient care coordinators - all of whom are dedicated to the highest level of patient care. The center consistently sets the standard of excellence with innovative, multidisciplinary therapies.

Dr. Elizabeth Bloom, a graduate of M. D. Anderson's residency program in radiation oncology, leads the Radiation Treatment Center at Bellaire. After serving four years in the Air Force as a radiation oncologist in Biloxi, Mississippi, she has returned to Houston for this unique professional and personal experience.

"I'm pleased to be able to work as a community radiation oncologist and deliver the highest quality of care in a convenient way," Dr. Bloom said. "Here I have access to M. D. Anderson's wealth of knowledge and an ability to offer patients optimal treatment in a small, personal setting."

The M. D. Anderson Cancer Center Radiation Treatment Center at Bellaire can treat more than 30 patients a day and is available to serve current M. D. Anderson patients as well as others in need of radiation treatment in Bellaire and surrounding Houston communities.

Individuals electing to receive treatment at the center become patients of M. D. Anderson's Division of Radiation Oncology while still remaining under the primary care of their personal physician or

referring specialist. Additionally, all treatment plans are peer reviewed in the same way as radiation oncology patients at M. D. Anderson.

For more information about M. D. Anderson Radiation Oncology Treatment Center at Bellaire, please call (713) 745-6123.

The role of anti-tumor cancer vaccines

--by Nuhad Ibrahim, M.D.

Metastatic breast cancer is a significant cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide. The great majority of patients with metastasis die of their disease, usually within a few years of relapse.

A small proportion of such patients, however, may remain alive and progression-free for extended periods of time. For patients who respond to metastatic breast cancer treatment, the average duration of response is relatively short and depends upon the type of response to the first-line chemotherapy, and not necessarily to the chemotherapy regimen itself. For complete responders, the median time to disease progression is 22 months, and for partial responders, the median time to disease progression is 13 months. Patients with stable disease have a median time to disease progression of about seven months from the time of initiation of chemotherapy.

The current standard of practice for patients who achieve maximum clinical response to first-line chemotherapy or complete remission is to give them a "chemotherapy holiday." Such patients are usually followed until first evidence of progression of disease, then they will be put on a second-line regimen therapy. So far, there is no role for maintenance chemotherapy.

The challenge for the oncologist, therefore, is to sustain the response of the patients and prolong the time-to-progression period without the morbidity and cumulative toxicity associated with cytotoxic therapy.

The THERATOPE vaccine is an investigational biological product manufactured by Biomira, Inc. This vaccine consists of a semisynthetic cancer-associated carbohydrate epitope, Sialyl Tn (STn), conjugated to a high molecular weight protein carrier, Keyhole Limpet Hemocyanin (KLH). THERATOPE vaccine is administered subcutaneously, initially with DetoxTM-B stable emulsion adjuvant for the first four administrations. Subsequently it is administered without adjuvant. STn is a naturally occurring cancer-associated epitope associated with aggressive disease and poor prognosis. This epitope may have functional significance in the growth and metastasis of cancer. KLH, on the other hand, functions as a potent immunogen that also enables recognition of the small STn carbohydrate by the body's immune system.

The working hypothesis is that the THERATOPE vaccine, which incorporates synthetic STn, elicits an immune response to cancer-associated STn and that this immune response may have a therapeutic affect-improved time-to-disease progression and survival. The THERATOPE vaccine is therefore designed for use as an immunotherapy for a variety of adenocarcinomas. It has been tested in more than 400 patients with adenocarcinoma of the breast, ovary, colon or pancreas. These clinical studies have demonstrated that the vaccine is associated with minimal toxicity and is able to elicit a T-cell dependent, specific antibody titer against natural and synthetic STn in patients.

Importantly, an apparent survival advantage was observed in breast cancer patients treated with a single low dose of intravenous cyclophosphamide, as an immune modulator, followed by treatment with the THERATOPE vaccine compared with patients treated with oral or no cyclophosphamide prior to treatment with the vaccine and compared with a frequency-matched retrospective-controlled group of patients with metastatic or locally recurrent breast cancer.

THERATOPE is being studied in a multicenter Phase III randomized controlled study for metastatic breast cancer. The patients are randomized into two groups. One group will receive all three components of the vaccine (STn, KLH, and Detox(-B)), which elicit both a cancer-specific and general immune response. The other group will receive KLH and Detox(-B) only, which elicit a general immune response, and serves as the control. This randomization will allow us to determine if there is a clinical effect (time to disease progression and/or survival) of the cancer-specific immune response to STn, having the general nonspecific immune response of KLH serve as a control.

Eligible patients include those with metastatic breast cancer who have a complete remission (CR), partial remission (PR or MR) or stable disease (SD) following first-line chemotherapy. Patients with SD are eligible if they have been stable for at least 24 weeks after the initiation of first-line chemotherapy. Patients must be enrolled no later than 40 weeks from the start of first-line chemotherapy for metastatic disease. Patients must not have received chemotherapy within three weeks of study entry and should have adequate bone marrow function and ECOG performance status < 2.

Ipsilateral locoregional disease as the only site of disease does not qualify a patient for enrollment in this study, nor does brain metastasis or prior history of cancer, excluding non-melanoma skin cancer or in situ carcinoma of the cervix. Patients with a history of autoimmune disease (for example, systemic lupus erythematosus [SLE], ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, multiple sclerosis, ankylosing spondylitis, rheumatoid arthritis) are excluded from this study. Patients with recognized immunodeficiency disease, including cellular immunodeficiencies, hypogammaglobulinemia or dysgammaglobulinemia, or hereditary or congenital immunodeficiencies also are excluded.

Patients should not have received interferons, tumor necrosis factor, other cytokines or biological response modifiers, BCG vaccine, or therapeutic monoclonal antibodies, including Herceptin, within four weeks prior to study entry. Patients can be on hormonal therapy or bisphosphonates if they were started more than three weeks earlier. Women who meet such criteria, are older than 18 years of age and are willing to participate need to sign the institutional IRB-approved informed consent.

For more information, treating physicians can call Dr. Nuhad Ibrahim at (713) 792-2817, or his research assistant, Hannah Brewer, at (713) 794-1022, to confirm the eligibility of patients.

American Society of Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology (ASTRO)

Boston, Massachusetts - October 2000

The annual meeting of the American Society of Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology convened Oct. 23 in Boston, Massachusetts. Following the meeting, the M. D. Anderson Associates hosted a reception for more than 100 of its members. Next year's event will be held in San Francisco, California.



Robert Lindberg, M.D. visits with William J. Spanos, M.D.



Enjoying the reception were (left to right) Kian Ang, M.D., Ph.D., Kathy Mason, and Luka Milas, M.D., Ph.D.

American College of Surgeons (ACS)

Chicago, Illinois - October 2000

More than 100 people attended the reception held in conjunction with the American College of Surgeons' annual meeting held in Chicago in October. The reception was co-hosted by the M. D. Anderson Associates and The University of Texas-Houston Medical School.

Distinguished Alumnus Award

M. D. Anderson has an enviable record for training individuals who have gone on to make significant contributions to medicine and science.

Every year since 1980, the M. D. Anderson Associates has selected from the ranks of M. D. Anderson's former trainees a physician or scientist to receive the Distinguished Alumnus Award. This year's recipient is Jean-Claude Horiot, M.D., Ph.D., president of the European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer.

Dr. Horiot visited M. D. Anderson Nov. 2 and spoke to an audience of faculty and staff about his 30 years of experience in cervix and head and neck cancers.

American Society of Hematologists (ASH)

San Francisco, California — December 2000

The annual meeting of the American Society of Hematology (ASH) convened Dec. 2 in San Francisco, California. Following the meeting, the M. D. Anderson Associates hosted a reception for more than 100 of its members. Next year's event will be held in Orlando, Florida.



Moshe Talpaz, M.D. (right) was one of the presenters at the American Society of Hematologists. He is pictured here with Adan Rios, M.D.



Also attending the reception were (left to right): Susan O'Brien, M.D., and Guiseppe Todeschini, M.D.

M. D. Anderson radiation oncologist elected to ASTRO high post

Dr. Nora Janjan, professor of radiation oncology at M. D. Anderson, recently became president-elect of the largest radiation oncology society in the world.

Dr. Janjan's term began in October. She is only the second woman in the organization's 42-year history to hold the post. Following a one-year rotation as president-elect, Dr. Janjan will become president of the society in 2001. After a year as president, she will then become chair of the board of directors.

With some 4,000 members, the American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology (ASTRO) is a leading organization in radiation oncology, biology and physics. The society's mission is to promote excellence in patient care and provide opportunities for educational and professional development.

"It is a tremendous honor," said Dr. Janjan. "The society is the lead organization for radiation oncology in the country, and I consider its leadership an evolving assignment. "The post comes with a three-year leadership commitment at various executive levels to acquire diverse experience

within the organization. The continuity allows ASTRO to have uninterrupted programs and initiatives as its officers make smooth transitions into positions with new responsibilities."

Dr. Janjan has been a faculty member at M. D. Anderson for 11 years, specializing in gastrointestinal cancers and pain management. She serves on numerous local, state, national and international advisory committees, such as the Harris County Medical Society, Texas Medical Association, American Association for Cancer Education and World Health Organization.

Special discount on breast cancer book offered

Breast Cancer, the inaugural volume of a new M. D. Anderson book series designed especially for oncologists in private practice, is scheduled for publication in the spring of 2001.

Breast Cancer includes 18 chapters detailing the M. D. Anderson approach to risk assessment, risk reduction, screening, diagnosis, treatment and follow-up care.

Future volumes in the series, tentatively titled The M. D. Anderson Cancer Care Series, will detail the M. D. Anderson approach to other major cancers. The series is edited by Dr. Aman Buzdar and Dr. Ralph Freedman and is supported by the M. D. Anderson Associates.

By special arrangement with the publisher, Springer-Verlag, Breast Cancer is being offered to members of the M. D. Anderson Associates at a discount of 35 percent off the retail price. Although the final price has not yet been set, it is anticipated to be approximately \$40 plus \$3 shipping and handling after the 35 percent discount is applied. For more information, please call (713) 794-1955, or e-mail Karen Lowery at klowery@mdanderson.org.

Upcoming Conferences and Events

- March 9-10 - **Brain tumor conference: "Together in Hope"*** Houston, Texas
- March 24-28 - **American Association for Cancer Researchers (AACR) Reception****
New Orleans, Louisiana
- April 25-27 - **Fifth Annual Trainee Recognition Day and Research Exposition****
M. D. Anderson Cancer Center Houston, Texas
- May 2-6 - **American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists (AACE) Exhibit****
San Antonio, Texas
- May 3-5 - **Texas Medical Association (TMA) Exhibit**** Houston, Texas
- May 12-15 - **American Society of Clinical Oncologists (ASCO) Exhibit and Reception****
San Francisco, California
- Aug. 2-4 - **Texas Academy of Family Physicians (TAFP) Exhibit**** Houston, Texas

* For more information, call
(713) 792-2222.

** For more information, call
(713) 794-1955.

Web updates

M. D. Anderson recently unveiled its revamped Web site featuring a simpler navigation, more streamlined site structure and faster search capability.

Visit www.mdanderson.org to see what all the excitement is about!

Also included on the Web site are two new monthly newsletters: [Friends of M. D. Anderson](#) and [CancerWise](#).

To view these, go to the new Web site and click on the "About M. D. Anderson" section, then on "News," then "Publications" to see the most recent issues. When visiting these two online publications, be sure to click on the "Subscribe" button to start receiving free monthly e-mail alerts when a new issue is published.

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