Adriana Albini, PhD
Scientific Collaborator
IEO-European Institute of Oncology
Milan, Italy

Adriana Albini works at the European Institute for Oncology-IEO, in Milan.

She was previously Full Professor of Immunology / General Pathology, Department of Medicine, University of Milan Bicocca.

She has been up until December 2021 Scientific Director of the MultiMedica Onlus Foundation, Milan. From April 2012 to August 2015, she was Director of the Department “Research and Statistics Infrastructure” (I-RS) at IRCCS - Reggio Emilia.

From June 2004 to September 2006, she was Deputy Scientific Director and from January 2005 to September 2006 she was Director of the Department of Traslational Oncology at the National Institute for Cancer Research (IST) in Genoa.

She has a PhD in Chemistry and trained from 1980 to 1983 as a Biochemist and postdoctoral fellow at Max-Planck Institute for Biochemistry, Martinsried bei Muenchen, Germany. From 1985 to 1988 worked as “Visiting Scientist” at NIH, Bethesda MD (USA).

In 2018 was elected in the Board of Directors of AACR (American Association for Cancer Research) the oldest association for cancer research in the world with about 40,000 members and since 2021 she is Chair of the "Cancer Prevention Working Group" of the AACR (American Association for Cancer Research).

She is a member of the Scientific Committee of ESO (European School of Oncology). She has been President of the Italian Society for Cancer Research (SIC) and President of Metastasis Research Society (MRS).

She is the President Elect of EWMD Italy (European Women Management and Development)

She is a member of the following editorial boards of scientific journals: Journal of the National Cancer Institute, Carcinogenesis, Molecular Cancer Therapeutics, Cancer Prevention Research.

She was Member of Panel L4 ERC Consolidator Grants.

She has over 380 scientific publications in peer review journals. She is among the most cited Italian women scientists with h index (a measure of citations) of 100 (scholar) and 87 (Scopus).

Her main focuses are in vitro and in vivo models for angiogenesis and inflammation, vascular biology, microenvironment, mechanisms of invasion of endothelial cells. Her major interest is cancer prevention and interception. She works on dietary derivatives and repurposed drugs for prevention.

She developed major assays in invasion and angiogenesis and has patents in the field.

J. Carl Barrett, PhD

Chief Scientific Officer
Precede Biosciences, Inc.
Boston, MA

Dr Barrett is currently a Professor at the University of North Carolina and Chief Science Officer of Precede Biosystems. Previously, Dr. Barrett was Vice President of Translational Medicine in Oncology R&D at AstraZeneca. His responsibility was to develop and execute biomarker strategy and translational sciences efforts to support drug development and back translational. From 2005-2011, he was Global Head of Oncology Biomarkers and Imaging at Novartis Oncology.

Prior to joining Novartis, Dr. Barrett was the founding Director of the NCI intramural Center for Cancer Research. He also was Chief of the Laboratory of Biosystems and Cancer. Prior to joining NCI, Dr. Barrett was Scientific Director at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.

Dr. Barrett's longstanding research interests focus on the critical genetic and epigenetic changes in the cancer cell, in particular the discovery of genes involved in breast cancer (BRCA1) and in the processes of cellular senescence and cancer metastasis. This led him into the drug development to translate basic research into patient impact. Trained as a chemist at the College of William and Mary, he received his Ph.D. in Biophysical Chemistry from Johns Hopkins University. He has published over 600 research articles and reviews.

Keywords: Discovering genomics and epigenomics of cancer. Developing therapies for cancer. Discovering mechanisms of cancer resistance.

General advice:
Follow your passion and have fun
Be a lifelong learner
Be a great communicator and listener
Key to success is the 3 C's: Creativity, Caring, Communication
Everything is possible
"We are all responsible to all for all" (Dostoyevsky)
"Progress in science depends on new techniques, new discoveries and new ideas probably in that order" (Sydney Brenner)
"I think one of the things about creativity is not to be afraid of saying the wrong thing " (Sydney Brenner)
Be kind

Michael A. Caligiuri, MD, FAACR

Professor, Department of Hematology & Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation
City of Hope Comprehensive Cancer Center
Duarte, CA

Michael A. Caligiuri, MD, (pronounced KALAJURY) recently completed his five-year term as President of the City of Hope National Medical Center in Los Angeles, California where he held the Deana and Steve Campbell Physician-in-Chief Distinguished Chair. He continues in his research laboratory at City of Hope as a professor in the Department of Hematology and Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation.

Prior to his appointment at City of Hope in February of 2018, Dr. Caligiuri was The CEO of The Ohio State University (OSU) James Cancer Hospital (2008-2017) and Director of OSU's Comprehensive Cancer Center (CCC; 2003-2017); he served as the Director of OSU's Division of Hematology-Oncology from 2000 through 2008. While CCC Director and hospital CEO, Dr. Caligiuri oversaw the construction of the 3rd largest cancer hospital in the United States and recruited over 300 physicians and scientists to OSU.

Dr. Caligiuri is a physician – scientist whose basic and translational work has focused on immunotherapy for both liquid and solid tumors. His laboratory has studied human natural killer (NK) cells for 35 years with over 400 original peer-reviewed publications on NK cells and/or cancer. Pivotal discoveries from the Caligiuri laboratory have made it possible to bring chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) NK cells from the laboratory into the clinic for cancer therapy. These include proprietary retroviral transduction of human NK cells, the elucidation of the site, stages, cytokines and molecular mechanisms involved in the differentiation of human NK cells from CD34(+) hematopoietic stem cells, and the discovery of IL-15 as the key cytokine for human NK cell development, survival, growth, and activation. These three advances have been critical for the genesis of CAR NK cells from peripheral blood, umbilical cord blood and induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs). Most all of this work was accomplished with his trainees as well as his longtime collaborator, Jianhua Yu, PhD.

Dr. Caligiuri has designed and conducted clinical studies modulating NK cells for over 1,000 patients with cancer. Over 130 students have trained in the Caligiuri laboratory and have received over 225 local, state, national or international awards for their research. In 2022 Dr. Caligiuri received the Basic Science Mentor Award from the American Society of Hematology.

Dr. Caligiuri is an elected member of the American Association for Clinical Investigation and the American Association of Physicians, and he is an elected Fellow in the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). He is past president of the Association for American Cancer Institutes; past president of the Society of Natural Immunity, and most recently served as president of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR), the world's largest cancer research organization. Dr. Caligiuri has served on the National Cancer Institute (NCI) Board of Scientific Counselors and Board of Scientific Advisors; He was chairman of the Institute of Medicine's National Cancer Policy Forum from 2014-2016. In 2010, Dr. Caligiuri was one of four individuals in the country to receive a MERIT award from the National Cancer Institute for his work on immunity and cancer, and in 2016 he received an Outstanding Investigator Award from the National Cancer Institute. In 2018, Dr. Caligiuri received the lifetime achievement award from Stanford University School of Medicine, was elected a Fellow of the AACR Academy and a member of the USA National Academy of Medicine.

Dr. Caligiuri is co-founder of Pelotonia (www.pelotonia.org), The Oncology Research Information Exchange Network (www.ORIENcancer.org), CancerBridge (www.mycancerbridge.com), The Ohio State University Drug Development Institute (https://cancer.osu.edu/research-and-education/drugdevelopment-institute), and CytoImmune Therapeutics (www.cytoImmune.com). Published Work: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/?term=caligiuri+ma.

John M. Carethers, MD, FAACR

Vice Chancellor
UC San Diego Health
La Jolla, CA

Dr. Carethers is the Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences at UC San Diego, overseeing UC San Diego Health along with the Schools of Medicine, Public Health and Pharmaceutical Sciences to integrate, grow, and expand the missions of clinical excellence, education, discovery, and community engagement. He obtained his MD from Wayne State, followed by residency in internal medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital and gastroenterology fellowship at the University of Michigan. He served as Chair of the Department of Internal Medicine at the University of Michigan from 2009 through 2022. Dr. Carethers is a trained gastroenterologist and physician-scientist who focuses his research in the area of hereditary colon cancer genetics and colon cancer disparities publishing over 250 manuscripts and book chapters. He has been continuously funded by the NIH for 30 years. His work has focused on DNA mismatch repair function that drives post-replicative repair of DNA. He served as Senior Associate Editor for *Gastroenterology*, completed a 2-year appointment on the National Commission for Digestive Diseases, and currently serves on the NIDDK Advisory Council. He is a past President of the American Gastroenterological Association, past President of the Association of American Physicians, and is currently on the Board of Directors of AACR. He is a member of the US National Academy of Medicine and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Keywords: Colorectal cancer; gastroenterology; familial cancer syndromes; medical administration; department chair; division chief; vice-president of health.

General Advice:
The power of knowledge through discovery is intoxicating once you are in the field of cancer research. Through science, figuring out pathways, molecular interactions, altered nucleotide consequences, metabolic adjustments, and cellular mishap patterns help aim ideas on how to combat these errors to ultimately help a patient to live as long and as full life as possible. Through your work, you develop into a curious leader that will help shape the future. This element of science-based learning, discovery, and expertise also prepare you to play a lead role in the future of science and education. Take the leap, enjoy, learn, be curious, ask questions, and teach others what you know once you have mastered things.

Graham A. Colditz, DPh, MD

Associate Director for Prevention & Control
Washington Univ. School of Medicine
St. Louis, MO

Graham A. Colditz, MD, DrPH became interested in the potential of disease prevention during his medical training at the University of Queensland in Australia. Now, over 40 years later, he is an internationally recognized epidemiologist and public health expert on the causes and prevention of chronic disease, particularly breast cancer. He described the association of hormone therapy (estrogen plus progestin) and increased risk for breast cancer, smoking and stroke in women, and showed colorectal cancer is largely preventable. Focusing his research on breast cancer he has studied risk factors across the life course and developed models to integrate these to predict future breast cancer diagnosis. Collaborating with Dr. Jiang and colleagues, he has refined the use of both mammogram images, and H & E images from breast tissue biopsies to improve risk prediction. Through his career he has used innovative approaches to translate research to practice and policy changes to achieve equitable improvements in population health. Dr. Colditz is a member of The National Academy of Medicine, is a fellow of the Royal Australian College of Physicians and of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, he has served on the NCI Board of Scientific Advisors and the NIH Council of Councils among other professional affiliations.

Keywords:
Lifestyle for cancer prevention and survivorship
Risk prediction
Using existing resources to maximize access and impact

General Advice: look to see where the gap in cancer prevention are, and how you can work to fill them.

Gerardo Colon-Otero, MD

Vice Dean
Mayo Clinic Comprehensive Cancer Center
Jacksonville, FL

Gerardo Colon-Otero, M.D., is a consultant in the Division of Hematology/ Oncology at Mayo Clinic in Florida, former Dean of Mayo Clinic Alix School of Medicine — Florida Campus. He joined the staff of Mayo Clinic in 1986 and holds the academic rank of professor of medicine. He has been recognized with the Mayo Clinic Distinguished Clinician Award in 2019, the Department of Medicine Mayo Brothers Clinical Excellence Award in 2023 and the Mayo Clinic Distinguished Educator Award. He has served as a member of the Hematology Board of ABIM and as Chair of the Minorities in Cancer Research Council of AACR.

Keywords: clinical trials, gynecological malignancies and cancer disparities.

General Advice: If you want to succeed in medicine, you just need to serve others above anything else.

Marcia R. Cruz-Correa, MD, PhD

Professor, Medicine & Biochemistry
University of Puerto Rico
San Juan, PR

Dr. Marcia Cruz-Correa completed her B.S. in Biology and her medical degree at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR). She completed a residency in Internal Medicine at the UPR and a fellowship in Gastroenterology & Hepatology at the Johns Hopkins University (JHU). She completed a doctorate degree in Clinical Investigation and Genetic Epidemiology at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. She is Professor of Medicine at the UPR, Adjunct Associate Professor of Medicine at Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore, MD) and Adjunct Professor of Surgical Oncology at MD Anderson Cancer Center (Houston, TX). She is the Director for the Division of Gastrointestinal Oncology at the Oncologic Hospital Isaac González Martínez, and leads the Gastrointestinal Epidemiology Network program, a multidisciplinary research program aimed at understanding the etiology, risk factors, and genetics in gastrointestinal cancer. Furthermore, the research program explores multiple agents to prevent or intercept cancer using early phase clinical trias. Dr. Cruz-Correa is a physician-scientist with strong focus in chemoprevention, hereditary cancer and health disparities. Dr. Cruz-Correa has been continuously funded by the NIH for over 15 years and leads several institutional grants including the Center for Translational Science Award (NIMDH funded) and is the Dean for Research at the UPR Medical Sciences Campus. She is actively involved as a Chair or committee member in several national professional organizations including the American Association for Cancer Research (governing board member), past Council of the AACR Minorities in Cancer Research, Counsil of the AACR Women in Cancer Research and immediate past board member of the NCI National Cancer Advisory Board and the American Gastroenterology Association. She is also editor of several prestigious medical journals including Gastroenterology and Cancer Prevention Research.

Johann S. de Bono, PhD

Professor
The Institute of Cancer Research
London, England

Professor Johann de Bono is Regius Professor of Cancer Research at The Institute of Cancer Research and The Royal Marsden Hospital and led on the development of abiraterone, cabazitaxel, enzalutamide, olaparib, lutetium PSMA and the molecular genomic stratification and germline sequencing of advanced prostate cancer. Professor de Bono leads the Drug Development Unit at the Royal Marsden which comprises >100 staff and conducts >50 Phase I clinical trials at any one time. He also runs a translational research laboratory. Professor de Bono has received numerous awards for his contributions to the field of oncology including drug discovery and prostate cancer.

Goals for the AACR

I am committed to transforming the care of individuals suffering from cancer and the conduct of hypothesis-testing, biomarker-driven, proof-of-concept clinical trials, as evidenced by my track record. I am now the head of Division of Clinical Studies at the Institute of Cancer Research (ICR), an independent college of the University of London. I am a key opinion leader in the development of novel cancer therapies, co-founding and now running, as its director, The Royal Marsden Drug Development Unit, one of the world's largest trials units for cancer patients and leading our Experimental Cancer Medicine Centre team. I am a leader in prostate cancer research, having changed the treatment of these diseases through trials of abiraterone, cabazitaxel, enzalutamide, olaparib, and Lutetium PSMA.

Research Interests: Clinical and translational research; experimental therapeutics; prostate cancer; elucidating treatment resistance; circulating biomarkers.

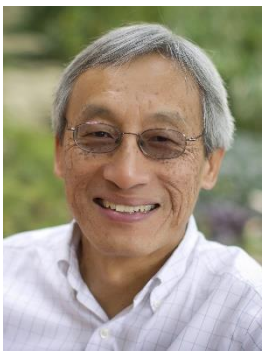
Melissa B. Davis, PhD

Director, Institute of Translational Genomic Medicine
Morehouse School of Medicine
Atlanta, GA

Melissa B. Davis, PhD is the Director of the Institute of Translational Genomic Medicine at Morehouse School of Medicine, SAMBAI Team Lead for Cancer Grand Challenge Team and Distinguished Investigator with the Georgia Research Alliance. She also served as Scientific Director of the International Center for the Study of Breast Cancer Subtypes (ICSBCS), Director of Health Equity for the Englander Institute of Precision Medicine and Associate Professor of Cell and Developmental Biology in the Department of Surgery and at Weill Cornell Medicine in New York, NY for several years before joining MSM. While in New York, she served as a Cancer Ethnicity Scholar, co leading the PolyEthnic-1000 project at New York Genome Center, where she currently holds an Associate Faculty appointment.

Dr. Davis received her Ph.D. in Molecular Genetics at the University of Georgia (Athens, GA, USA) where she completed groundbreaking work on developmental functions of steroid signaling in model organisms. She completed postdoctoral training in Functional Genomics and Systems Biology at Yale School of Medicine (Human Genetics) and the University of Chicago (Human Genetics and Institute for Genomics and Systems Biology). Here work involved key elements of the ModENCODE project, showing the dynamics of hormone receptor binding, establishing the distinctions of these functions on a cellular level. Her postdoctoral training in Cancer Health Disparities at University of Chicago at the Interdisciplinary Center for Health Disparities, led to the current trajectory of her work to uncover the biological determinants of cancer health disparities and how they intersect with marginalization of minoritized population.

Dr. Davis's has published groundbreaking findings that established a new lens to study associations of biological factors in cancer outcomes as related to genetic ancestry. Specifically, she has discovered links between African ancestry and tumor burdens that have a disproportionate burden in people across the African diaspora. Dr. Davis is a pioneer in the field of "disparities genomics," with specific focus in breast cancer expanding into prostate and gynecological cancers in recent years. Her current findings involve utilizing quantified ancestry to unravel genetic vs environmental influences in tumor biology among race/ethnic groups, including epigenetic cell signaling and immunological responses in the tumor microenvironment and systemic immune regulation. These novel opportunities to develop precision medicine applications in minority populations, are part of a concerted effort to increase knowledge of genomic profiles of underrepresented minoritized and under-represented cancer patients. Her work is a prime example of how inclusion of diverse ethnic groups can empower research designs for discovery of novel or unique tumor biology.



Channing J. Der, PhD

Professor
University of North Carolina Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC

Dr. Channing Der serves as the Sarah Graham Kenan Professor of Pharmacology at the Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Having received his PhD from the University of California at Irvine, Dr. Der went on to complete his postdoctoral research training at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Harvard Medical School.

Der is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, a recipient of the NCI Outstanding Investigator Award, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Mentor Award, the Hyman L. Battle Distinguished Cancer Research Award, and the University of California, Irvine Distinguished Alumni Award. He is also recipient of an Einstein BIH Visiting Fellow Award.

Dr. Der has made contributions to the fields of molecular pharmacology and cancer cell biology. One early discovery was the presence of activated Ras oncogenes in human cancers in 1982, marking the identification of the very first cancer genes. RAS genes comprise the most frequently mutated oncogene family in human cancers. The pursuit of anti-RAS therapeutic strategies has been a major focus of his research studies.

Caroline Dive, PhD

Interim Director
CRUK Manchester Institute
Manchester, UK

Caroline graduated with a degree in Pharmacy, trained to become a registered Pharmacist and then underwent PhD training in Cambridge, studying cell heterogeneity and resistance to chemotherapy. She became a principle investigator (too) soon after her PhD studies and developed her basic discovery research group studying drug-induced apoptosis in the early 90s first in Birmingham then in Manchester. She received a Lister Institute Fellowship and continuous support from CRUK and becoming a full Professor in 2002. A change of gear towards translational research came in 2004 when she moved to the CRUK Paterson Institute (now the CRUK Manchester Institute) and began to develop what, in 2024, became the CRUK National Biomarker Centre.

After completing her PhD studies in Cambridge, Professor Caroline Dive moved to Aston University's School of Pharmaceutical Sciences in Birmingham where she established her own group studying mechanisms of drug induced tumour cell death, before moving to The University of Manchester to continue this research. Caroline was awarded a Lister Institute of Preventative Medicine Research Fellowship before joining the CRUK Manchester Institute in 2003. Currently, she is Interim Director of the Manchester Institute and Director of the aligned CRUK National Biomarker Centre, with research spanning tumour biology, preclinical pharmacology, biomarker discovery, biomarker assay validation and clinical qualification to regulatory standards, bioinformatics, biostatistics and most recently, digital clinical trials.

General Advice: make sure you surround yourself with good mentors and colleagues; make sure you make a mental note of what you learn each day; eyes wide open for opportunity; read beyond your research field; get a ‘rhino’ skin; learn to both multi-task and to shut out distraction in order to focus; enjoy your science.

Keywords: Cancer Biomarkers, Pharmacology, Small Cell Lung Cancer, liquid biopsy.

Erica L. Jackson, PhD

Chief Discovery Officer
Scorpion Therapeutics
South San Francisco, CA

Dr. Erica L. Jackson is the Chief Discovery Officer at Scorpion Therapeutics, a clinical-stage oncology company advancing next-generation precision medicines. An accomplished scientific leader, she has a proven track record in new target discovery, strategic portfolio contributions, and cross-functional leadership across all stages of drug discovery and development, from early research through IND submission.

Before joining Scorpion in 2020 as EVP of Biology, Dr. Jackson held senior roles at AbbVie, ORIC Pharmaceuticals, and Genentech, where she contributed significantly to oncology discovery and translational research. She also brings experience in business development, including academic and corporate collaborations, and evaluating in-licensing and partnering opportunities.

Dr. Jackson is an expert in tumor cell heterogeneity, cancer stem cells, and mechanisms of drug resistance. She has extensive experience in developing in vivo cancer models—ranging from genetically engineered mouse models to patient-derived xenografts—for target identification, proof-of-concept validation, and preclinical efficacy studies.

She earned her Ph.D. in Biology from MIT and holds a B.A. in Biology from Brandeis University.

Elizabeth M. Jaffee, MD, FAACR

Deputy Director & Professor of Oncology
John Hopkins University Bethesda, MD

Dr. Jaffee is an internationally recognized expert in cancer immunology and pancreatic cancer. She studies the pancreatic tumor microenvironment using preclinical models, and tests novel immunotherapies in patients. She is Deputy Director of the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins, Co-Director of the Skip Viragh Pancreatic Cancer and Associate Director of the Bloomberg Kimmel Institute for Cancer Immunotherapy. Dr. Jaffee is known for developing the most successful translational pancreatic cancer program in the country that has served as a model for other outstanding programs. Dr. Jaffee is a Past President of AACR. She has served on a number of committees at the National Cancer Institute, including the co-chair of the Biden Moonshot Blue Ribbon Panel which identified high impact research priorities for the NCI. She currently serves as Chief Medical Advisor to the Lustgarten Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research. She is the inaugural director of the Convergence Institute for Integrating Technologies and Computational Sciences at Johns Hopkins. Dr. Jaffee is a member of the National Academy of Medicine, a Fellow of the American College of Physicians, a Fellow of American Association for the Advancement of Science, a Fellow of the SITC Academy of Immuno-Oncology and a Fellow of the AACR Academy. Most recently, she was appointed chair of President Biden's Cancer Panel.

General Advice:
It is a privilege to be able to work in science and medicine. It is important to take the long view. Don't fear the challenges that we all face throughout our career. Instead, consider them, and use them as an opportunity to evolve your science and pivot toward the most impactful research needed at that time.

Keywords
Cancer immunotherapy; cancer vaccines; immune prevention; tumor microenvironment

Emma M. Lees, PhD

Senior Vice President, Research
Bristol-Myers Squibb Co.
New York, NY

Emma Lees is responsible for leading Bristol Myers Squibb's mechanisms of cancer resistance thematic research center in Cambridge, MA. Here, Emma and her team primarily focus on examining cancer biology, utilizing their strong expertise in tumor intrinsic biology to gain valuable insights on why patients don't respond or stop responding to therapies.

Emma also helps define and create a vision for the company's presence in Cambridge, working with other leaders to develop objectives and drive a culture aligned with Bristol Myers Squibb's global strategy.

"The vision of Cambridge is to leverage integrated teams, with scientists coming together from different disciplines to try and solve the problem of cancer resistance," said Lees. "In doing so, we are working with a cross-functional discovery team in order to interrogate the problem, with a unique model that stands out among the biopharmaceutical industry."

Emma holds a PhD from Imperial Cancer Research Fund in London, England, and has worked on both coasts of the U.S., spending time at the Novartis Institutes for Biomedical Research, DNAX Research Institute/Schering-Plough and most recently, Jounce Therapeutics.

Ming Lei, PhD

Senior Associate Vice President, Office of Research and Graduate Education
West Virginia University Health Sciences Center
Charleston, WV

A seasoned scientist with years of experience overseeing federal programs that support research capacity building at academic and research institutions, Dr. Ming Lei became the senior associate vice president for Research and Graduate Education, West Virginia University Health Sciences on August 1, 2023. In addition, Lei serves as vice dean of research for the WVU School of Medicine and professor in the Department of Microbiology, Immunology and Cell Biology.

Prior to WVU, Lei served as director of the Division for Research Capacity at the National Institute of General Medical Sciences since 2008. At NIGMS, Lei directed programs that supported more than 10,000 investigators and students with a budget of $510 million in 2022. He also helped shepherd institute-wide efforts and programs to increase diversity of the biomedical research workforce.

Lei earned his doctoral degree from Cornell University and taught genetics and microbiology.

Reza Mazhari, PhD

Chief Business Officer, Business Development
Triana Biomedicines
Lexington, MA

Dr. Mazhari joined TRIANA Biomedicines in June of 2023. He brings to TRIANA more than twenty years of business development as well as drug discovery and development experience. Prior to joining TRIANA, he was the Head of Search and Evaluation for Oncology at Novartis, where he led numerous successful in-licensing deals that contributed to the early-stage oncology pipeline and expanded the portfolio of enabling technologies. Dr. Mazhari was also responsible for out-licensing and divestment efforts at Novartis Institutes for BioMedical Research (NIBR). Previously, Dr. Mazhari was the Vice President of Translational Medicine at Rexahn Pharmaceuticals. Prior to that, he held dual responsibilities for leading drug discovery and early development in addition to leading the company's business development efforts at Cerecor. He was the co-founder of Cardioxyl Pharmaceuticals which was acquired by Bristol-Myers Squibb for $1.8 billion. He began his career as a faculty member at the School of Medicine in The Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Mazhari holds a PhD in Bioengineering from University of California at San Diego and a post-doctoral research fellowship in Cardiovascular Medicine from The Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.

Ruben M. Mesa, MD

Executive Director
Mays Cancer Center
San Antonio, TX

Dr. Ruben Mesa is senior vice president of Atrium Health, president of Atrium Health Levine Cancer (the cancer service line for Atrium Health) and executive director of the National Cancer Institute (NCI)-designated Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Comprehensive Cancer Center. Additionally, Dr. Mesa serves as the Vice Dean of the Wake Forest University School of Medicine for cancer programs and the Charles L. Spurr, MD, Professor of Internal Medicine.

Dr. Mesa's research focuses on MPN biology, novel therapeutics and over 100 phase I-III clinical trials, symptom assessment tools and non-pharmacological interventions to alleviate MPN symptoms. He has led or co-led the development of 6 drugs that have been FDA approved for MPNs. Dr. Mesa has won many career awards for his research from the Mayo Clinic, from patient and MPN organizations, and was the 2024 Distinguished Alumnus from University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

He is passionate about advancing cancer health equity and increasing minority patients' participation in cancer clinical trials. At the National Cancer Institute Dr. Mesa both sits on CTAC (Clinical Trials Advisory Council) as well as is Cancer Equity Leader (CEL) for the NCI Center for Health Equity.

Folakemi T. Odedina, PhD

Enterprise Deputy Director
Mayo Clinic Comprehensive Cancer Center
Jacksonville, FL

Dr. Odedina is an internationally recognized cancer researcher and academic leader. She has led global research programs for decades, primarily funded by the National Cancer Institute and the Department of Defense. This research focuses on developing cost-effective, community-based behavioral intervention programs to address prostate cancer in Black males.

Her research, education, training and community outreach activities have exclusively focused on addressing health disparities in racial and ethnic minority and underserved communities. As a behavioral scientist, she conducts behavioral research across the translational continuum to test behavioral models, confirm who will benefit from behavioral interventions and examine how to deliver interventions in all settings.

Dr. Odedina's research program has developed and validated multiple behavioral models that include multilevel assessment of barriers and facilitators for the uptake of interventions, tested and adapted interventions that include behavioral clinical trials, and worked closely with community health workers to implement health intervention programs in diverse community settings worldwide.

She has also been a leader in training future scientists whose backgrounds are underrepresented in biomedical research.

William Pao, MD, PhD

Chief Executive Officer
Revelio Therapeutics, Inc.
New York, NY

William Pao is a physician-scientist whose career has spanned academia, industry and biotech. As a faculty member at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, and Vanderbilt University in Nashville, he was a practicing oncologist and was recognized for his ground-breaking work in translational medicine, mechanistic and clinical studies of targeted cancer therapeutics, and cancer genomics and personalized medicine, changing the standard of care in lung cancer. In industry, through executive leadership positions at Roche in Basel (Switzerland) and Pfizer in New York, he oversaw the discovery and development of a portfolio of new molecular entities, many of which have been approved to treat a range of diseases in cancer, rare diseases, ophthalmology, infectious diseases (including vaccines), neuroscience, rare blood disorders, and immunology. William is currently CEO and Co-Founder of a cancer biotechnology company.

William received his undergraduate degree from Harvard, and his M.D. and Ph.D. degrees from Yale University. The author of multiple scientific and medical publications, he has advised numerous professional associations and has served on the editorial boards of prestigious medical research journals. William also co-founded MyCancerGenome, an internationally recognized online tool to enable a genetically informed approach to cancer medicine.

William is author of the book, BREAKTHROUGH: The Quest for Life-Changing Medicines, published in the UK October 2024, and in the US Jan 2025.

Electra D. Paskett, PhD, FAACR

Deputy Director
The Ohio State University
Columbus, OH

Electra D. Paskett, PhD, is the Marion N. Rowley professor of cancer research at the Ohio State University (OSU). She is distinguished professor and director of the Division of Cancer Prevention and Control in the College of Medicine, professor in the Division of Epidemiology in the College of Public Health, deputy director for population sciences and community outreach in the OSU Comprehensive Cancer Center and founding director of the Center for Cancer Health Equity at the James Cancer Hospital. Dr. Paskett's over 500 peer-reviewed publications showcase her work in intervention research directed at cancer prevention, early detection, and survivorship issues. She has received numerous awards such as the American Society of Preventive Oncology Distinguished Achievement Award, the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Distinguished Lecture Award on the Science of Cancer Health Disparities, and the AACR Team Science Award. She was a member of the National Cancer Institute's National Cancer Advisory Board from 2017-2023.

Martine J. Piccart, MD, PhD

Scientific Director
Institut Jules Bordet
Brussels, Belgium

Martine J. Piccart, M.D., Ph.D., is honorary professor of oncology at the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) and scientific director at the Institut Jules Bordet (Brussels/Belgium). Earning her medical degrees at ULB and oncology qualifications in New York and London, she is also a member of the Belgian Royal Academy of Medicine. She held presidencies of the European CanCer Organisation (ECCO), the European Organisation for the Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC), the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO). She served on the American Society of Clinical Oncology Board (ASCO) as well as on the Board of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) which nominated her as fellow of the AACR Academy in 2013.

A strong advocate for and leader of international research collaborations, Prof. Martine Piccart, together with Prof. Aron Goldhirsch, created the Breast International Group (BIG) in 1996, which today unites 56 academic breast cancer research groups from around the world. Prof. Piccart's has successfully managed a number of high-profile, Phase 3 clinical trials such as HERA (HERceptin Adjuvant), MINDACT (Microarray In Node-Negative and 1 to 3 Positive Lymph Node Disease May Avoid Chemotherapy), ALTTO (Adjuvant Lapatinib and/or Trastuzumab Treatment Optimisation), and APHINITY (Adjuvant Pertuzumab and Herceptin in Initial Therapy in Breast Cancer).

An accomplished clinician and scientist, Prof. Piccart is author or co-author of over 710 publications in peer-reviewed journals. She has also been honoured with numerous prestigious Awards.

Timothy R. Rebbeck, PhD, FAACR

Professor & Director, Zhu Family Center for Global Cancer Prevention
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
Boston, MA

Professor Rebbeck joined the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and the Harvard TH Chan School in 2015 as the Vincent L. Gregory, Jr. Professor of Cancer Prevention. Professor Rebbeck serves as the director for the Zhu Family Center for Global Cancer Prevention Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health and the Center for Global Health Equity at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. He directs large, multicenter studies and international consortia that have identified genetic, molecular, and epidemiological factors associated with cancer risk, outcomes, and disparities. He leads the international Men of African Descent and Carcinoma of the Prostate (MADCaP) network and has led a number of consortia studying hereditary cancer risk and prevention. He also directs the NCI-funded African cancer STARS training program that supports career development for African cancer researchers and project managers. Dr. Rebbeck has mentored over 65 trainees, most of whom hold positions in academia. He has been continuously funded by the NIH since 1994.

Elizabeth A. Platz, ScD, MPH

Professor, Epidemiology
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg Sch. of Public Health
Baltimore, MD

Dr. Platz is a Professor and the Martin D. Abeloff, MD Scholar in Cancer Prevention in the Department of Epidemiology at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, where she directs the NCI-funded (T32) training program in Cancer Epidemiology, Prevention, and Control. She holds joint appointments in the Departments of Oncology and Urology at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and is a member of the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins and. She received her doctorate in epidemiology from and was a post-doctoral fellow at the Harvard School of Public Health. A major focus of her work is the use of molecular epidemiology approaches to understand the mechanisms underlying the incidence and progression of cancer, including prostate. She conducts her work with an eye toward translation of findings into prevention and treatment strategies. Known for her leadership of multidisciplinary prostate cancer research teams, she is at the forefront of epidemiologic research on the role of inflammation, a target for prevention, in the development of prostate cancer, and on telomere length as a prognostic marker for poor outcome after treatment for prostate cancer. She is the editor-in-chief of the American Association for Cancer Research's *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention*, and an elected member of AACR's Board of Directors. She is an elected Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science "For distinguished contributions to our understanding of the roles of genetics, epigenetics, and environmental factors in cancer epidemiology." In addition to her academic efforts, she was formerly appointed by the governor to the Maryland State Council on Cancer Control, and is a Steering Committee member and former chair of the Maryland Cancer Collaborative.

Robert Radinsky, PhD

Vice President, Oncology Scientific Innovation
Janssen R&D, LLC
Raritan, NJ

Robert represents the Oncology Therapeutic Area in Johnson & Johnson Innovation, Boston. In this role, he is responsible for identifying and fostering innovation that supports the Oncology Therapeutic Area strategies. Prior to this role, he led Discovery Research, Oncology Therapeutic Area, for Janssen Research & Development.

Robert has had a very successful oncology research career in both academics and industry. Prior to joining Janssen, he was Executive Director, Oncology Research at Amgen Inc., where he led groups at multiple research sites including Thousand Oaks, California, and Cambridge, Massachusetts. He was responsible, in part, for research and/or pharmacology for numerous active targeted therapeutic anti-cancer programs (protein, small molecule and nanotechnology modalities), culminating with multiple candidates in clinical trials and an approved drug for the treatment of colorectal carcinoma.

Before joining the industry 15 years ago, Robert was on the faculty at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, first serving as an American Cancer Society Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Department of Cell Biology and eventually becoming a tenured Associate Professor in the Department of Cancer Biology. He continued as an Adjunct Professor at the MD Anderson Cancer Center after joining the industry.

Robert has published more than 135 peer-reviewed articles, holds multiple patents, and is a present/past member of numerous societies, including the American Association for Cancer Research, Board of Directors for the Metastasis Research Society, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Scientific Advisory Board and the Aspen Cancer Conference. He is an Editorial Member and/or ad hoc reviewer for more than 20 scientific journals and has served on review panels for a number of granting agencies, including the National Institutes of Health/National Cancer Institute, the Department of Defense Prostate and Breast Cancer Research Programs, and the Veterans Administration Merit Review Board.

Robert earned his doctorate in Molecular Biology and Microbiology from Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine in Cleveland, Ohio.

Victoria L. Richon, PhD

CEO
Entact Bio, Inc.
Watertown, MA

Victoria Richon is a scientifically trained executive with leadership experience in biotechnology companies, global pharmaceutical companies and academia. Before joining Entact, Dr. Richon was the President and CEO of Ribon Therapeutics, a clinical stage biotechnology company focused on the discovery and development of first-in-class cancer and inflammatory disease medicines. Previously, she was the Vice President and Global Head of Oncology Research and Translational Medicine at Sanofi where she was responsible for the oncology drug discovery and translational medicine portfolio. Prior to Sanofi, Dr. Richon was Vice President of Biological Sciences at Epizyme, Inc., a biotechnology company pioneering the discovery and development of novel therapeutics focused on epigenetics, including Tazverik, the first EZH2 inhibitor approved by the FDA for the treatment of advanced epithelioid sarcoma and follicular lymphoma. Earlier in her career, she was Founder and Executive Director of Aton Pharmaceuticals which was acquired by Merck & Co. Aton was formed to develop HDAC inhibitors, including Zolinza, the first HDAC inhibitor approved by the FDA. Dr. Richon is a member of the Board of Directors of HotSpot Therapeutics, Inc.

Dr. Richon is the author of over 100 papers and carried out postdoctoral studies at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. She received her PhD in Biochemistry at the University of Nebraska Medical Center and a BA in Chemistry at the University of Vermont.

Brian M. Rivers, PhD, MPH

Professor and Director, Cancer Health Equity Institute/Prof. Community Health/Prev. Med.
Morehouse School of Medicine
Atlanta, GA

Brian M. Rivers is a Professor in the Department of Community Health and Preventive Medicine and the Director of the Cancer Health Equity Institute at Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta, Georgia.

He previously served as an Associate Professor in the same department from 2015 to 2019.

Dr. Rivers has an extensive background in public health and cancer research, having held roles such as Associate Professor in the Department of Oncologic Science at the University of South Florida and various faculty positions at Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute in Tampa, Florida, where he also served as Associate Director of Moffitt Diversity.

His leadership extends to his role as Executive Director of the Florida Prostate Cancer Network and his academic contributions at Texas A and M University, where he was Associate Director and Senior Research Scientist at the Center for the Study of Health Disparities.

Dr. Rivers also has significant experience in public health research, having worked as a program manager and coordinator at the University of Alabama-Birmingham's Prevention Research Center.

Dr. Brian M. Rivers' research interests focus on addressing cancer disparities through behavioral science, public health, and health equity.

He is particularly dedicated to investigating health disparities in underserved populations, with a special emphasis on African American men diagnosed with prostate cancer.

His work explores innovative approaches to intervention, including multi-level, multi-domain, and multi-sectoral strategies, and the use of novel technological platforms to enhance cancer care.

Dr. Rivers is also deeply engaged in dissemination and implementation science, conducting randomized controlled trials and evaluating digital health interventions that aim to reduce disparities.

Additionally, his research extends to understanding the social and molecular determinants of lung cancer disparities, with the goal of developing population-based interventions that can improve outcomes and promote health equity across diverse communities.

Dr. Brian M. Rivers has been deeply involved with the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) in several key leadership roles.

He is currently the Chair of the Science Education and Career Advancement Committee (2022-2025) and Chair of the Subcommittee on the AACR Pilot High School Internship Program (2024-present). He previously served as Vice Chair of the same committee (2021-2022).

Dr. Rivers has also worked on initiatives aimed at addressing racial inequities in cancer research, including his role on the Task Force on Eliminating Racial Inequities in Cancer Research (2021-present).

His involvement spans multiple committees related to cancer disparities, such as the AACR Cancer Disparities Progress Report Steering Committee, and he's been part of the program committee for the AACR's Conference on The Science of Cancer Health Disparities.

Dr. Rivers has co-chaired key AACR conferences and think tanks on cancer health disparities and served on several prestigious award committees, including the AACR Margaret Foti Award and the AACR Lifetime Achievement in Cancer Research Award.

His broad contributions to AACR underscore his dedication to advancing cancer research, particularly in underrepresented communities.

Sheila K. Singh, MD, PhD

Professor; Director, Centre for Discovery in Cancer Research; Chief of Neurosurgery
McMaster Children's Hospital, Hamilton
Toronto, ON Canada

Dr. Sheila Singh is a Professor of Surgery and Biochemistry, University Scholar, Chief Pediatric Neurosurgeon at McMaster Children's Hospital, Division Head of Neurosurgery at Hamilton Health Sciences, and Inaugural Director of the Centre for Discovery in Cancer Research (CDCR) at McMaster University. She holds a Tier 1/ Senior Canada Research Chair in Human Brain Cancer Stem Cell Biology and served as founding Director of the McMaster Surgeon Scientist Program. Her PhD thesis described the novel identification of a population of cancer stem cells that exclusively drive the formation of brain tumors (SK Singh et al. Identification of human brain tumor initiating cells. Nature 2004: 7015(432): pp 396-401). Since 2007, her lab applies a developmental neurobiology framework to the study of brain tumorigenesis. Building upon previous cell culture techniques developed for the isolation of normal neural stem cells (NSC) and applying them to brain tumors, and through development of a xenograft model to efficiently study brain tumor initiating cell (BTIC) activity, her lab aims to understand the molecular mechanisms that govern BTIC self renewal. She has published extensively on the regulation of BTIC signaling pathways in glioblastoma, brain metastases and childhood medulloblastoma, with an ultimate goal of selectively targeting the BTIC with appropriately tailored immunotherapies and molecular therapies. Her laboratory is funded by CCSRI, CIHR, TFRI, CRS, the Stem Cell Network, McMaster Surgical Associates, Brain Canada and the Boris Family Fund. She served as scientific founder and interim CEO of a start-up company, Empirica Therapeutics, a brain cancer therapeutics company that is seeking new, data-driven and polytherapeutic treatment options for patients with Glioblastoma and brain metastases. Empirica was acquired by Century Therapeutics Inc (Philadelphia) in June 2020, resulting in the creation of a Canadian subsidiary, Century Canada, based in the McMaster Innovation Park in Hamilton. She has won many awards including most recently the 2024 Canadian Cancer Society Robert L. Noble Prize for outstanding achievements in basic biomedical cancer research, and is a fellow of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences and of the Royal Society of Canada, and a council member of AACR. She has published over 200 manuscripts in journals such as Nature, Nature Medicine, Cancer Cell, Cell Stem Cell, Cancer Research, PNAS and many others; she has 26,792 citations and her h-index is 84.

Keywords: Brain cancer, neurosurgery, neuro-oncology, glioblastoma, immunotherapy, childhood brain cancer, stem cell biology.

General Advice: A career in basic and translational cancer research is so rewarding, but it requires optimism, tenacity and perseverance. Experimental science yields negative data most of the time, and the truly positive findings are few and far between. Know that the rare discovery or breakthrough only comes after many failures, and that failing is part of learning in science.

Kedar S. Vaidya, PhD

Associate Director, Research and Early Development
Jazz Pharmaceuticals, Inc.
Palo Alto, CA

Kedar Vaidya is Associate Director in the Department of Research and Early Development at Jazz Pharmaceuticals. As a pharmacologist and cancer biologist by training, Kedar started his career in the In Vivo Pharmacology Department at Abbott Laboratories at Abbott Park, Illinois in 2009 with a focus on development of small molecules and biologics. Kedar Joined Jazz Pharmaceuticals in 2020 and is a pharmacology team lead and program lead for multiple discovery and development programs with a focus on biologics and drug delivery systems. His contributions have led to the approval of Venetoclax and 8 other entities that are in various phases of clinical testing.

Arti P. Varanasi, PhD, MPH, CPH

President and Founder
Advancing Synergy, LLC
Baltimore, MD

Dr. Arti Patel Varanasi is President and CEO of Advancing Synergy, LLC, where she is committed to developing innovations that empower individuals to lead healthier and longer lives. She has over 25 years of combined experience in cancer research, advocacy, capacity building, public health, and project management and maintains close ties to the medical, public health, and research community. Advancing Synergy served as the technology partner on a grant awarded to Mercy Medical Center in Baltimore, Maryland by Susan G. Komen for the Cure® to provide virtual, personalized support to women undergoing breast cancer treatment through an innovative technology. Dr. Varanasi is passionate about developing innovations that build stronger communities and enable all individuals to lead healthier and longer lives. She is interested in leveraging technology to address chronic disease and increase health equity. Dr. Varanasi is an active member of the health, entrepreneurial, and technology communities in the D.C.-Maryland-Virginia area.

Formerly, Dr. Varanasi was a Senior Study Director at Westat and managed a variety of research and informatics projects. At Westat, she managed and coordinated daily activities of various research studies that collected, processed, and analyzed biospecimens. Her work focused on applying her scientific and informatics expertise to the design, implementation, and analysis of several nationally recognized epidemiological studies. Prior to Westat, she served as the Director of Global Health Development at CTIS, Inc. in Rockville, Maryland, where her work focused on leveraging information technology solutions to build global health capacity. Dr. Varanasi was a fellow in the Cancer Prevention Fellowship Program in the Division of Cancer Prevention at the National Cancer Institute from 2001-2005, where her research interests focused on nutrition, immunity, and cancer prevention.

Dr. Varanasi holds a Ph.D. in Pathology from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and a Master's in Public Health from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and recently received her certification in public health (CPH). Her doctoral research focused on understanding the genetic and epigenetic alterations that contribute to the development of mouse lung tumors. Dr. Varanasi currently teaches Molecular Biology, Epidemiology, and Psychosocial-Determinants of Health at AAP.

Danny R. Welch, PhD

Professor of Cancer Biology
University of Kansas Cancer Center
Kansas City, KS

Danny R. Welch, Ph.D. studies the genetic basis of metastasis. After receiving a BS in Biology from the University of California-Irvine and a PhD in Biomedical Sciences at the University of Texas-Houston, Welch worked in the pharmaceutical industry before joining Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine. In 2002, his laboratory moved to the University of Alabama - Birmingham. In 2011, he founded the Department of Cancer Biology at the University of Kansas Cancer Center. He is a Komen Scholar Emeritus, Past-president of the Metastasis Research Society and Past-president of the Cancer Biology Training Consortium (CABTRAC). He is Vice-President/Treasurer of CABTRAC. He served as Editor-in-Chief for *Clinical & Experimental Metastasis* and as Deputy Editor of *Cancer Research* and is on the editorial board of 8 other journals.

His laboratory's major scientific accomplishments include: (1) Discovery of 8 of the 30 functionally defined metastasis suppressors (includes small non-coding RNA); (2) First to identify the pro-metastatic role for neutrophils (now described as myeloid-derived suppressor cells) and pro-invasive/pro-metastasis effect of TGF
β. (3) Wrote the key methods review for performing metastasis assays and defined the first iteration of the hallmarks of cancer metastasis; (4) Described how KISS1 induces dormancy of already disseminated cells and regulates metabolism ; (5) Developed the MNX mouse to study cross-talk between mitochondrial and nuclear DNA for the study of cancer, cardiovascular disease and other complex diseases. Defined mitochondrial genes contributing to metastasis; and (6) Primary mentor for 25 graduate students and 43 postdoctoral fellows, all of whom have obtained research positions in cancer research in academia, industry and government.

Keywords: Metastasis, genetics, mitochondria, microenvironment

General Advice: Your integrity is the only thing that matters.

Clayton C. Yates, PhD

Director, Translational Health Disparities and Global Health Equity Research
John Hopkins University
Baltimore, MD

Dr. Clayton Yates is an internationally recognized expert in prostate cancer health disparities research, cell biology, molecular biology, and molecular pathology. Dr. Yates earned his PhD from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine Department of Pathology in 2005 as well as certificate of training in Tissue Engineering and Regenerative medicine from the McGowan Institute of Regenerative Medicine. He then went on to complete a postdoctoral fellowship at Emory University School of Medicine Department of Urology. After completing his post-doctoral training in 2007, Dr. Yates accepted a tenure track assistant professor position at Tuskegee University in the Department of Biology and Center for Cancer Research. Dr. Yates was promoted to associate professor in 2010 and full professor in 2014. Dr. Clayton Yates currents holds appoints in the Center for Cancer Research, and a joint appointment Materials Science and Engineering at Tuskegee University. He is also adjunct faculty at Clark Atlanta University Department of Biology and Department of Pathology at University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Dr. Yates has an interest prostate and breast cancer research, particularly in African Americans. Dr. Yates has established several cell lines based models derived from African American patients that are used by many labs today to study molecular events the lead prostate cancer development and metastasis. Additionally, Dr. Yates has identified multiple biomarkers for the prediction of aggressive cancers in African Americans with prostate or breast cancer, and this has led to the development of a novel therapeutic for African American breast, prostate, and pancreatic patients that is posed to enter clinical trials in 2018. Dr. Yates has spoken at over 35 universities and conferences including the First NCI Health Disparities Conference and more recently he was invited to deliver the AACR Distinguished Lecture at Howard University on April 5, 2017, in Health Disparities.

Dr. Yates has also received numerous research honors and awards, authored over 65 peer-reviewed publications, participated in numerous Department of Defense and NIH study section panels, and received numerous DOD and R level NIH grants in prostate and breast cancer health disparities, totaling over 25 million dollars in extramural funding. Dr. Yates is currently the research director for the Transatlantic Prostate Cancer Consortium, which is focused on understanding the tumor biology in native African men in Nigeria and developing novel clinical interventions for this population. Dr. Yates is currently the principal investigator (PI) of the Research Centers at Minority Institutions (RCMI), site PI of CTSA (jointly with UAB-hub institution), and co-PI of U54 Cancer Health Disparities with Morehouse School of Medicinal and University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Oyewale Daejin Abidoye, MD

Vice President, Therapeutic Area Head, Solid Tumor
Abbvie South San Francisco
Atherton, California

Daejin Abidoye is the Vice President, Therapeutic Area Head for Solid Tumor Oncology at AbbVie. He has over twenty years of experience in oncology, cancer research and drug development. Prior to joining AbbVie, Daejin was the Therapeutic Area Lead for Oncology Development and Clinical Research at Gilead Sciences. Prior to this, he held various roles of increasing responsibility at SeaGen and Roche-Genentech. Daejin is a board-certified oncologist with a career in clinical practice at Scripps Health in Southern California. He completed his residency in internal medicine at St. Elizabeth's Medical Center in Boston and his fellowship training in hematology and oncology at the University of Chicago. He received his medical degree from the University of Lagos in Nigeria and his M.P.H. degree in Clinical Research from Temple University in Philadelphia.

Coleman K. Obasaju, MD, PhD

Associate Vice President
Eli Lilly and Company (Indianapolis, IN)
Indianapolis, Indiana

Coleman K. Obasaju, M.D., Ph.D. is an Associate Vice President at Eli Lilly and has served as Global Leader for Diversity in Clinical research, Global Medical Affairs Leader, Global product development and Global product safety leader. Previously he has led the US Oncology Medical organization, and had responsibility for the US Medical Liaisons, in the Oncology Business Unit (OBU) of Eli Lilly.

Dr. Obasaju received his Medical degree at the University College Hospital, Ibadan, Nigeria in 1982. He then went on to pursue post-graduate training in clinical pharmacology and medical oncology in England at the Christie Hospital and the University of Manchester, obtaining both a Master's and a Doctorate degree.

A former Audrey Mayer Mars Oncology Fellow, Dr. Obasaju completed an Internal Medicine residency program at the University of Pennsylvania Health Systems and then completed a combined fellowship in medical oncology/hematology in the U.S. at Fox Chase Cancer Center and Temple University Cancer Hospital, both in Philadelphia. He obtained a Clinical Investigator Training Program (CITP) Fellowship awarded by the National Cancer Institute (NCI) prior to joining Eli Lilly and Company in 2001.

Additionally, Dr. Obasaju has served two four years terms, as a board member of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Minority in Cancer Research Council. In that role, he provided more visibility to the scientific contribution of minority scientists and helped in developing strategies to improve the pipeline of future minority investigators.

Dr Obasaju championed an Eli Lilly/Roswell Park Cancer Institute partnership to develop a workshop to train and mentor minority Oncology investigators in Clinical cancer research. Three yearly workshop was completed with outstanding success. He played a key role in the partnership between Eli Lilly and the Tuskegee Bioethics Institute that had a goal of increasing the number of African Americans who participate in pharmaceutical clinical trials and the ultimate goal of reestablishing trust between the African American community and the medical research establishment.

In 2013, The National Medical Association(NMA) awarded Dr Obasaju the prestigious Scroll of Merit for outstanding work in the field of Medicine and specifically for his dedication and tenacious efforts in clinical research and untiring focus on increasing minority participation in clinical trials. In 2018 he received the "Top Black Doctors in Health care" award, which was jointly given by Black Doctors.org and Milken Institute School of public health.

Dr Obasaju has given multiple presentations in National and International forums and is the author of numerous publications in peer review journals.

Keywords: Clinical trials. Solid tumor Oncology. Late-stage development.

General Advice: Focus on your passion and be open to new experiences. Recognize the value of teamwork and mentorship.

Yusri A. Elsayed, MD, PhD

Senior Vice President, Head of Oncology R&D
Johnson & Johnson
Spring House, Pennsylvania

As Global Oncology Therapeutic Area Head for Johnson & Johnson, Yusri Elsayed, M.D., M.H.SC, Ph.D. is responsible for the discovery, development and life cycle advancement of the company's robust oncology pipeline and portfolio. He leads a global team of scientists that bring together expertise in small molecules, advanced biologics, cell therapies, vaccine platforms, translational research, diagnostics, and immuno-oncology.

Discovery and development of new medicines for cancers is fast-paced and complex and therefore, Yusri and his team built a comprehensive approach that focus on an end-to-end internal capabilities, as well as robust external innovation strategy to advance science and novel therapeutics in core disease areas, including hematologic malignancies, prostate cancer, bladder cancers, immuno-oncology, and lung cancer. The combination of these efforts has led to many successful oncology partnerships in the past across the life sciences ecosystem and continues to distinguish Johnson 7 Johnson as a partner of choice.

Prior to his appointment as Global Oncology Therapeutic Area Head, Yusri led the Hematologic Malignancies Disease Area within Johnson & Johnson Research & Development since 2013. In this role, he had responsibility for creating and executing the scientific strategy to advance internal and externally sourced discovery and development programs. Together with his team, Yusri is recognized for building an industry-leading hematologic malignancies portfolio that has been foundational for scientific innovation and has achieved many noteworthy milestones, including multiple U.S. Food and Drug Administration Breakthrough Therapy Designations and major product approvals for several first-in-class transformational therapies such as IMBRUVICA® (ibrutinib), DARZALEX®, CARVYKTI, TECVALI and TALVEY.

Yusri joined Johnson & Johnson in 2005 as Medical Director. Since then, he has held positions of increasing responsibility in the Oncology Therapeutic Area, including Medical Leader for YONDELIS® (trabectedin), VELCADE® (bortezomib) and several early clinical development programs. Yusri played an instrumental role in the establishment of the Hematologic Malignancies DAS.

Prior to joining Johnson & Johnson, Yusri led early development studies of oncology drugs, including small molecules and monoclonal antibodies, at Bristol Myers Squibb.

Prior to transitioning to the pharmaceutical industry, Yusri served as Assistant Professor of Medicine, Division of Hematology/Oncology at the Cancer Institute of New Jersey at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. There he led numerous clinical research programs as a principal investigator and authored several publications. He also had the privilege of caring for many oncology patients during this time. Yusri completed his clinical fellowship training in Medical Oncology at the National Cancer Institute and in Hematology at the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD. He is board-certified in Internal Medicine, Medical Oncology and Hematology. Yusri also earned a master's degree in clinical research from Duke University and a doctorate from Kyushu University in Japan.

Janeen R. Azare, PhD
Sr. Director, Oncology Field Medical
Pfizer Oncology
New York, New York

Janeen Azare is a seasoned professional in the oncology medical field, currently serving as the Oncology Senior Field Medical Director at Pfizer since October 2020. With over 24 years of experience in the pharmaceutical and healthcare industries, she has held various roles that have contributed to her extensive expertise. Prior to her current position, she was an Oncology Field Medical Director at Pfizer from 2015 to 2020. Her earlier career includes roles as a Medical Science Liaison at Spectrum Pharmaceuticals and Abraxis BioScience, as well as research positions at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.

Dr. Azare holds a Ph.D. from New York University, an MSPH from Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, and a BS from Xavier University of Louisiana.

Based in New York, she continues to contribute to Pfizer's mission in oncology, leveraging her extensive background in medical science and research.

Specialties: Oncology, Hematology, Toxicology, Signal Transduction, Molecular and Cellular Biology, Experimental Therapeutics.