Texas Collaborative Center for Hepatocellular Cancer (TeCH)

Fall/Winter 2020 Newsletter

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VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

https://www.bcm.edu/research/labs-and-centers/research-centers/texas-collaborative-center-for-hepatocellular-cancer

CONTACT US:

chelseyl@bcm.edu

Past & Upcoming Meetings

The 1st Annual TeCH Symposium was held virtually on Saturday, October 17th, 2020. The symposium featured presentations by experts from BCM, MD Anderson, and UT Southwestern and a keynote presentation by Dr. Tim Greten from the National Institutes of Health. View the event agenda here. If you would like any speaker presentation, please email Chelsey Lindemann at chelseyl@bcm.edu. Stay tuned for information about the 2nd Annual Symposium in Fall 2021.

Committee Updates

Community Outreach

The Community Outreach Committee identifies and disseminates HCC-related educational materials to patients and providers. The committee developed a resource repository focused on HCC risk factors such as Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and alcohol. Once the committee determines which materials are most useful to the community, the Clinical Network Committee will assist with dissemination.

The Community Outreach Committee is also producing an HCC continuum-of-care framework. The framework serves as a useful resource for understanding HCC's complexity and risk factors.

Clinical Network

The Clinical Network Committee identifies top interventions to implement in a clinical setting based on importance, performance gap, feasibility, and context of implementation. The top interventions are EMR Risk Stratification and Distributing Education Materials. The committee will work closely with an Implementation Consultant to strategize organization and execution of these interventions.

Featured CAP Project: Jessica Hwang, M.D.

RP190513 Patient-centered liver cancer prevention in the Houston community

There are medical conditions that increase a person's risk of developing liver cancer, and these risk factors include hepatitis B and C virus infections, alcohol liver disease, and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. People at risk for liver cancer can have none, one, or more than one of the risk factors. These risk factors can lead to fibrosis (potentially reversible) and subsequent cirrhosis (irreversible) of the liver, which in turn can lead to liver cancer. Current recommendation by medical groups is to screen adult patients seeking primary care suspected to have risk factors, such as hepatitis or alcohol use disorder, one risk factor at a time, but screening rates are low. Due to lack of strong data, there is no recommendation to screen patients for non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. The proposed work has two overall goals: (1) to identify the best way to screen patients in primary care clinics for these risk factors for fibrosis or cirrhosis and (2) to manage risk factors to decrease the risk of worsening fibrosis. This study is significant because it will identify the most efficient and cost-effective way to simultaneously assess persons presenting to a primary care settings for all of the major risk factor conditions that can lead to fibrosis or cirrhosis and yield high-quality data on whether a tailored behavioral intervention can help reduce fibrosis in persons at risk for liver cancer. We will also provide evidence to support a screening strategy for non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, for which currently no screening strategy exists. We will create a web-based risk assessment tool to be used during clinic visits, and these could be widely shared to many others in the state and beyond. This project has the potential to change the field of liver cancer research by providing primary care providers evidence-based screening and management strategies to detect and treat medical conditions that are risk factors for fibrosis or cirrhosis.

Source: https://www.cprit.state.tx.us/grants-funded/grants/rp190513

TeCH Member Spotlight: Howard Monsour, M.D.

Our TeCH Member Spotlight features our newly appointed Clinical Network Committee Co-Chair, Dr. Howard Monsour. Dr. Monsour specializes in gastroenterology and hepatology. He is the former Chief of the Section of Hepatology and Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine at Weill Cornell Medical College and the Institute for Academic Medicine at Houston Methodist Hospital. He recently moved to Granbury. During his career, he has focused on treating patients with chronic hepatitis C. Dr. Monsour was an investigator for clinical trials of investigational medicines to treat hepatitis C, hepatitis B, hepatocellular carcinoma, and other liver diseases. He was the director of the Kidney Hepatitis C Clinic and co-director of the Methodist Liver Cancer Program.

Dr. Monsour received a B.A. from St. Vincent College and M.D. from University of Autonoma de Guadalajara. He completed his postgraduate training at the University of Nebraska Medical Center and is board certified in gastroenterology and transplant hepatology. Dr. Monsour speaks multiple languages, including Spanish.

About TeCH

The overall goal of TeCH is to reduce HCC mortality in Texas by reducing the number of people who develop cancer or detecting it when it is curable. However, we need more research to identify people who are at high risk of liver cancer, to detect liver cancer early, and to turn discoveries into actions doctors and patients can use. TeCH will help researchers who study liver cancer work faster and better; team up with other researchers; and share discoveries with doctors, the community, and the general public to change healthcare. We will work with scientists, doctors, healthcare providers, insurers, liver cancer organizations, community leaders, payers, and state/government representatives and agencies find usable policies. Learn more about TeCH at https://www.bcm.edu/research/labs-and-centers/research-centers/texas-collaborative-center-for-hepatocellular-cancer

Steering Committee: The Steering Committee includes the PIs and Co-PIs of the CAP Research Awards and other TeCH Committee leaders to facilitate communication and interaction across CAP research projects. The Steering Committee's responsibilities include setting priorities and developing and enforcing TeCH policies.

Director: Hashem B. El-Serag, M.D., M.P.H.

Scientific Committee: The Scientific Committee includes basic, translational, and clinical scientists associated with HCC prevention, early detection, diagnosis, and treatment. The Scientific Committee identifies cutting-edge research questions and techniques, and connections and synergy among CAP and other consortia investigators.

Co-Directors: Hashem B. El-Serag, M.D., M.P.H. and Fasiha Kanwal, M.D., M.S.H.S

Clinical Network Committee: The Clinical Network Committee disseminates healthcare provider and system education material and transforms novel evidence into improvements in healthcare processes and outcomes.

Co-Directors: Sumeet Asrani, M.D. and Howard Monsour, M.D.

Community Outreach Committee: The Community Outreach Committee will produce culturally sensitive educational material on HCC risk factors, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment targeted at patients and at-risk communities for dissemination by our statewide Community Partners.

Co-Directors: Maria Jibaja-Weiss, MEd and Jane Montealegre, Ph.D.

Data and Biospecimen Core: The Data and Biospecimen Core is a centralized resource for CAP projects that assists with project management, statistics, programming and systems support, and informatics technology.

Director: Chris Amos, Ph.D.