3rd Annual
IMMUNO-ONCOLOGY
Young Investigators’ Forum

An Academic Research Forum Focusing on Research and Career Development for Oncology Junior Faculty and Fellows

www.IOYIF.com
Follow us on Twitter @IOYIForum

Presented by The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center and Creative Educational Concepts, Inc. in collaboration with the Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer.

This activity is supported by an independent educational grant from AstraZeneca.
Message from the Activity Chairs

Dear Colleagues,

Immune modulation is one of the most promising therapeutic approaches for many different types of cancer. The broad activity already demonstrated for immune checkpoint inhibitors and cellular therapies is stimulating the development of multiple new immunotherapy agents, and a dramatic expansion of both basic/translational and clinical/translational research. To maintain and expand these research efforts, we need to train Young Investigators in this field to meet current and future challenges. The Third Annual Immuno-Oncology Young Investigators’ Forum brought together investigators in their formative years with a research focus in immuno-oncology to provide training and insight into this promising therapeutic area. A world-class group of Expert Faculty Judges selected 40 Young Investigators (junior faculty, postdocs, and fellows) based on submission of a blinded abstract. The investigators presented their research and received constructive critiques from the Expert Faculty Judges. We incorporated professional coaching and mentoring as a central feature of the meeting.

The research presented at the meeting was representative of the many investigational areas of immuno-oncology and included the hottest topics in the field, specifically immune checkpoint inhibitors such as anti-PD-1/PD-L1, CAR-T, and novel cell therapies.

The Third Annual Immuno-Oncology Young Investigators’ Forum was deemed a success. The veteran Expert Faculty Judges commented that “the quality of the science and presentations were superb.” Young Investigators identified several special highlights of the program. They gained insight into academic career development from comments and direction on their research provided by the Expert Faculty Judges during the presentations and social events, and also from talks by expert faculty on their personal career development and challenges.

We could not have been more impressed by the sophistication of research being conducted by this group of Young Investigators, the high quality of their research ideas, the maturity demonstrated in presenting and addressing questions raised by the Expert Faculty Judges, and their desire to make a major difference in advancing the treatment of cancer.

On behalf of the Expert Faculty Judges, we take this opportunity to congratulate the Young Investigators on their accomplishments and wish them the very best for continuing success.

Sincerely,

Mario Sznol, MD
Program Chair

Patrick Hwu, MD
Program Co-Chair
The Immuno-Oncology Distinguished Young Investigator Award provides recognition for Junior Faculty who continue their dedication and sustained research efforts in immunotherapy. This year’s Immuno-Oncology Distinguished Young Investigators’ Awards were presented to:

2017 BASIC SCIENCE/TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH WINNER

Greg M. Delgoffe, PhD
University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA

Research Title: Metabolic Symbiosis Between Regulatory T-cells and the Tumor Microenvironment: A Potential Target for Improvement of Immunotherapy

Dr. Delgoffe received his bachelor’s degree from Western Michigan University in 2004, and went on to complete his doctoral training with Jonathan Powell at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in 2010, where he studied the role of nutrient sensing in T-cell fate and function. He then went on to do postdoctoral training with Dario Vignali at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, where he focused on the function of regulatory T-cells in the tumor microenvironment. Dr. Delgoffe started his independent research group at the University of Pittsburgh in 2014, exploring how the tumor microenvironment creates a metabolic barrier to effective antitumor immunity. His research program seeks to identify basic mechanisms dictating metabolic changes in immune cell activation, explore the environmental drivers of immune cell exhaustion in cancer, elucidate the mechanisms by which tolerogenic and suppressive populations thrive in the tumor microenvironment, and develop new metabolic modulatory therapies to improve the immunotherapeutic response to cancer.

“I’m honored to receive this IOYIF research grant. This support allows us to conduct some deep genetic and epigenetic profiling of suppressive T-cell populations isolated from the tumor microenvironment. These studies would have been a luxury without this support, but now, not only can we perform them, but it will likely elevate the impact of our research and provide a platform for future work.”

“The IOYIF was a fantastic event. Not only were Young Investigators able to meet with folks that are titans in the field, but, maybe more importantly, we were able to connect with each other. I think we will see a lot of future collaborations in the field of cancer immunology that will have started during this weekend.”

2017 CLINICAL/TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH WINNER

Avery D. Posey, Jr., PhD
University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA

Research Title: Mixed Signals: Alteration of CD28 Signaling Motifs Improves Anti-tumor Efficacy and Persistence of CAR T-cells

Dr. Posey is an instructor within the Center for Cellular Immunotherapies at the University of Pennsylvania. He completed a five-year postdoctoral fellowship in the laboratory of Carl June, where he generated glycosylation-specific chimeric antigen receptors (CARs) to precisely target tumor-glycoforms of MUC1 and studied the signaling and metabolic influences of CAR costimulation on redirected T-cells. He received his PhD in genetics from the University of Chicago in 2011 and earned two B.S. degrees from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County in bioinformatics and biochemistry in 2005.

His current research involves the development of CAR therapies for clinical study in pet dogs, which could prove to be an invaluable resource to investigate novel adoptive immunotherapies, including CAR T-cells to target cancer-specific glycosylation and technologies to improve engineered T-cell persistence in patients.

“I will use the award to present data on new glycosylation-targeting CAR T-cells and to further interrogate the mechanism of increased persistence through small changes in CAR T-cell signaling.”

“The IOYIF provided excellent one-on-one presentation coaching that is useful for any presenter to improve their skills and I will be sure to incorporate the suggestions I received into my future presentations. In addition, I have established networks in immuno-oncology with other Young Investigators that will be beneficial for future collaborations and career development.”
2017 Junior Faculty Winners

BASIC SCIENCE/TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

1st Place
Amanda W. Lund, PhD
Oregon Health and Science University
Research Title: Lymphatic Vessels and the Non-hematopoietic Tumor Stroma Regulate Anti-tumor Immunity

“We plan to use the grant award to fuel our efforts to profiling transcriptional changes that occur in LECs as a function of a changing tumor immune microenvironment to identify novel adhesion and regulatory molecules (in addition to PD-L1) that are utilized by the lymphatic endothelium to influence local immunity.”

“Participating in IOYIF was a tremendous opportunity to generate a network of colleagues both at the senior and peer levels in the field of immuno-oncology. The Forum had a significant impact on how we are thinking about our scientific problems but perhaps more importantly how I approach disseminating, both orally and written, those concepts for maximum impact.”

2nd Place
Andrew Zloza, MD, PhD
Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey
Research Title: Targeting Anti-Viral Immune Responses to Recondition the Tumor Microenvironment

“I will use the funds to pay-it-forward — meaning that with these funds I will be able to hire a summer undergraduate researcher— who will someday hopefully become a postdoctoral fellow and early-stage PI and attend this meeting!”

“Both my lab and the summer undergraduate study student will benefit greatly. I will be able to provide an intensive research experience and the researcher will elevate her/his CV to be more competitive for an elite graduate program.”

3rd Place
Claire I. Vanpouille-Box, PhD
Weill Cornell Medicine
Research Title: Regulation of Radiation-induced Anti-tumor Immunity by TGFβ Superfamily Members

“Receiving the grant award will allow me to perform the last sets of experiments that were suggested by the Expert Faculty Judges to hopefully submit a manuscript as soon as possible.”

“Attending this forum was honestly one of the best opportunities that has been given to me. In a short amount of time, I got an overview of the most promising research areas in immuno-oncology. Most importantly, I had the chance to formally and informally talk with expert faculty and to meet young researchers with whom I really connected professionally and personally. I believe that the networking benefit from this event was terrific considering that I am still in touch with some IOYIF fellows as well as faculty.”
2017 Junior Faculty Winners

CLINICAL/TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

1st Place
Malini Mukherjee, PhD
Baylor College of Medicine
Research Title: Evaluating Design Parameters of CAR Presenting Cells Using a Quantitative Imaging Toolbox

“The grant award will be used for my research in understanding the immune synapse of CAR expressing cells. This includes high resolution imaging for visualization and understanding of the CAR synapse.”

“Participating in the IOYIF meeting was one of the best places to meet with and interact with faculty members at the same or similar stage in their careers as me. This allowed for some excellent cross talk and collaboration opportunities. Mentoring by the panel of judges was extremely helpful and allowed the kind of face time and one on one conversation that is usually not feasible in larger meetings. The focus areas addressed by the mentors were also very well picked and genuinely helpful to address real needs and questions that we all had.”

2nd Place
Giedre Krenciute, PhD
Baylor College of Medicine
Research Title: Transgenic Expression of IL15 Improves Antiglioma Activity of IL13Ra2-CAR T-cells but Highlights the Need to Target Multiple Glioma-associated Antigens

“I will use the award to cover my travel expenses to one of the immunotherapy conferences/meetings (most likely SITC).”

“I learned how to present and prepare to present my work; I’m more focused and better prepared for Q&A session; I met lots of new junior faculty and learned about their experience setting up a lab; I talked to senior faculty and got lots of suggestions on how to start my own lab, manage my funding, hire people, etc. I was pleasantly surprised how good and beneficial this forum was. I thought it would be “just another meeting” but it was much more than that. I am very happy that I had a chance to attend it and will definitely recommend to all my junior faculty friends next year.”

3rd Place
Tullia C. Bruno, PhD
University of Pittsburgh
Research Title: Antigen-presenting Tumor B-cells Impact the Phenotype of CD4 Tumor Infiltrating T-cells in Lung Cancer Patients

“I will use this award toward travel to the annual SITC meeting.”

“As a consequence, the impact of the IOYIF on my professional development is tremendous because I was given precious mentoring advice throughout the meeting, tips and tricks during lunch with Dr. Wargo and Dr. Butterfield, constructive feedback from expert faculty regarding my research and important advice on how to further establish myself by my IOYIF fellow peers.”
2017 Fellows Winners

BASIC SCIENCE/TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

1st Place

Jennifer L. Guerriero, PhD
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

Research Title: Class Ila HDAC Inhibition Promotes an Anti-tumor Macrophage Phenotype that Induces Breast Tumor Regression and Inhibits Metastasis

“I plan to use the grant money to elucidate PD-L1 inhibitory effects on myeloid cells in breast cancer. I will perform an unbiased analysis to test the hypothesis that PD-L1 expression on macrophages correlates with macrophage phenotype.”

“The Immuno-Oncology Young Investigator’s Forum was an incredible opportunity. There was an emphasis on career development through grant writing and manuscript writing workshops, and professional coaching and feedback on our talks. Additionally, I had the opportunity to meet my peers in an intimate setting to build relationships and collaborations. These are the scientists I’ll spend the next 30 years working with. It was incredible to meet them and get to know them. The senior faculty that graciously spent time at the forum provided invaluable expertise on career development, had incredible scientific insight and advice, and were really lovely to get to know. Overall, this was an incredible experience and I was honored to be part of it.”

2nd Place

Maksim Mamonkin, PhD
Baylor College of Medicine

Research Title: Developing CAR T-cell Therapy for T-cell Malignancies

“This Award will enable me to further expand my professional network and share my research with other scientific societies.”

“The IOYIF was an excellent opportunity to learn about the cutting edge research done in world-class labs by my peers and to get constructive feedback on my own project in a friendly yet professional manner by the leaders in the field. It inspired new ideas and fostered new connections that will undoubtedly have a positive impact in my career.”

3rd Place

Agne Taraseviciute, MD, PhD
Seattle Children’s Research Institute

Research Title: A Non-Human Primate Model That Recapitulates B Cell-directed Chimeric Antigen Receptor (CAR) T-cell-mediated Cytokine Release Syndrome (CRS) and Neurologic Toxicity

“I plan to use the grant award for purchasing supplies, such as antibodies, to be used in my research studies.”

“Participation in the IOYIF has made a long lasting impact for my professional development in teaching me ways to improve my presentation skills and connect with the audience while presenting my research, as well as how to effectively and succinctly answer panel questions. It also provided a wonderful setting in which to network with accomplished researchers in the field of immuno-oncology as well as other Young Investigators in my field. I am excited to get a chance to get to know the participants and look forward to presentations at scientific meetings and starting collaborations in the future.”
2017 Fellows Winners

CLINICAL/TRANSITIONAL RESEARCH

1st Place
Alexandre Reuben, PhD
University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
Research Title: Genomic and Immune Heterogeneity Contribute to Differential Responses to Targeted Therapy and Immune Checkpoint Blockade in Melanoma

“The grant will be used to further the work presented, by purchasing antibodies and reagents allowing us to study the functional heterogeneity of T cells in patients with synchronous melanoma metastases.”

“Participating in IOYIF was a phenomenal networking opportunity to connect with both junior scientists like myself and outstanding faculty judges which were all accessible and down to earth and offered great career advice. I think beyond the great science presented, this has to be the number one aspect which will benefit my career, research and collaborations now and down the road.”

2nd Place
Thomas U. Marron, MD, PhD
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
Research Title: In Situ Vaccine using Radiotherapy, Poly-ICLC and Flt3L

“I am going to use the award to support attending a protocol development seminar for the next generation of in situ vaccine protocol (which I discussed in my talk). We are hoping to finalize/open this trial within the next year.”

“The IOYIF was an amazing opportunity not only to hear about cutting edge research going on in our field, but also meet my peers and the leaders in the field. The small size lent to great discussion, and I am already incorporating some discussions I had into planning new experiments. It was definitely one of the highlights of my fellowship.”

3rd Place
Miles Andrews, BSc, BMBS, PhD
University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
Research Title: Immune Features and Responses to PD-1 Inhibitor Immunotherapy are Associated with Differential Composition of the Gut Microbiota in Advanced Melanoma

“I plan to use the award to present expanded microbiome data later this year at an international meeting (likely SMR/Melanoma Congress). This will facilitate enhanced interest in the field, and increased opportunity for collaboration to more comprehensively mine the microbiome and translate discoveries into parallel clinical applications. As we are interested in the upstream effects of factors like diet, body habitus and ethnicity on the microbiome itself, international collaborations will be essential to understanding these mechanisms.”

“Participating in IOYIF has been highly beneficial in enabling in-depth exposure to a much broader range of immunotherapeutic approaches than I typically deal with. IOYIF has put me in touch with experts in related/complementary fields at both peer and mentor levels, which will enhance my future scientific endeavours. Excellent advice was on offer at the many informal settings throughout the weekend which will help me to navigate the professional pathways of a Clinician-Scientist.”
Miles Andrews, BSc, BMBS, PhD
University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
Houston, TX

Lawrence P. Andrews, PhD
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, PA

Tullia C. Bruno, PhD
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, PA

Wei-Shen Chen, MD, PhD
University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
Houston, TX

Lauren E. Colbert, MD, MSCR
University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
Houston, TX

Maria Angelica Cortez, MSc, PhD
University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
Houston, TX

Conrad Russell Y. Cruz, MD, PhD
Children's National Medical Center
Washington, DC

Weiguo Cui, PhD
Blood Center of Wisconsin
Medical College of Wisconsin
Milwaukee, WI

Emily K. Curran, MD
University of Chicago
Chicago, IL

Greg M. Delgoffe, PhD
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, PA

Stephanie Dorta-Estremera, PhD
University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
Houston, TX

Johannes F. Fahrmann, PhD
University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
Houston, TX

Jennifer Guerriero, PhD
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
Boston, MA

Linda Hammerich, PhD
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
New York, NY

Giedre Krenciute, PhD
Baylor College of Medicine
Houston, TX

Aaron E. Lisberg, MD
UCLA
Los Angeles, CA

Amanda W. Lund, PhD
Oregon Health & Science University
Portland, OR

Ying Ma, MD, PhD
University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
Houston, TX

Maksim Mamonkin, PhD
Baylor College of Medicine
Houston, TX

Thomas U. Marron, MD, PhD
Tisch Cancer Institute
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
New York, NY

Rohit Mathur, PhD
University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
Houston, TX

Rina M. Mbofung, PhD
University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
Houston, TX

AJ Robert McGray, PhD
Roswell Park Cancer Institute
Buffalo, NY

Sharada Mokkapati, PhD
University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
Houston, TX

Malini Mukherjee, PhD
Baylor College of Medicine Center for Human Biology
Houston, TX

Wungki Park, MD
University of Miami
Miami, FL
2017 IOYIF Participants and Institutions

Avery D. Posey, Jr., PhD
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA

Sangeetha M. Reddy, MD, MSci
University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
Houston, TX

Alexandre Reuben, PhD
University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
Houston, TX

Alba Rodriguez Garcia, PhD
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA

Agne Taraseviciute, MD, PhD
Seattle Children’s Research Institute
Seattle, WA

Jessica Thaxton, PhD, MsCR
Medical University of South Carolina
Hollings Cancer Center
Charleston, SC

Claire I. Vanpouille-Box, PhD
Weill Cornell Medicine
New York, NY

Mireya Paulina Velasquez, MD
Baylor College of Medicine
Houston, TX

Franz D. Villarroel-Espindola, PhD
Yale School of Medicine
New Haven, CT

Junmei Wang, PhD
University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
Houston, TX

Daniel Y. Wang, MD
Vanderbilt University Medical Center
Nashville, TN

Oladapo Yeku, MD, PhD
Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
New York, NY

Kristina H. Young, MD, PhD
Earle A. Chiles Research Institute
Providence Cancer Center
Portland, OR

Andrew Zloza, MD, PhD
Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey
New Brunswick, NJ
2017 Updates from IOYIF Participants

RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS AND NATIONAL MEETING PRESENTATIONS

JUNIOR FACULTY

Giedre Krenciute, PhD

Publication


Malini Mukherjee, PhD

Publication


FELLOWS

Sangeetha M. Reddy, MD, MSci

Presentation


Maksim Mamonkin, PhD

Publication

2017 IOYIF Highlights

PRESENTATION SKILLS ENHANCEMENT WORKSHOP

To augment the professional development aspects of the 2017 IOYIF, participants were provided with an individual coaching session by a team of experts from ListenWritePresent. Young Investigators who attended the one-on-one pre-program coaching sessions received expert advice and critique of their presentation and public speaking skills and were also provided with a complimentary copy of the book, Writing, Speaking, & Communication Skills for Health Professionals written by the ListenWritePresent team.

MENTORING MOMENTS

Throughout the meeting, members of the expert faculty judging panel provided 15 minute “mentoring moment” sessions on the topics of grant writing, the academic promotion system, work-life balance, choosing the right mentor, publishing a scientific paper, and making it in academics without a lab. These sessions offered the opportunity for experts to share real-life career experiences and pearls for the Young Investigators.

HOW ATTENDING THE IOYIF WILL IMPACT YOUNG INVESTIGATORS’ CAREERS

“Listening to feedback by the judges on several talks as well as the meet-the-professor lunches gave me several pointers that will help with advancing my career. The mentorship moments helped strengthen my knowledge on grant writing, mentoring, and publishing. I am now inspired to re-focus on getting quality papers out of my lab.”

“Fantastic, inspirational talks and great mentors. This experience has definitely solidified my interest in immuno-oncology and to continue research in this fascinating and ever-changing field.”

“Questions by the judges have made me consider aspects of my research that need to be explored and the addition of controls. Networking with faculty and participants in a small setting was invaluable.”

“The IOYIF has significantly improved my network of fellow scientists and opens up several avenues of collaboration.”

“I feel more confident about my presentation skills and social skills to network with other researchers.”
4th Annual IM MunO-OncoLOGy Young Investigators' Forum

April 19-22, 2018
The Houstonian Hotel
Houston, TX

Abstract submission deadline and details coming soon.
Please visit www.ioyif.com for more information.