

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION WILL BENEFIT CANCER RESEARCH AND TREATMENT

Partnerships include programs of education, training and development in molecular oncology

April 12, 2012, Sao Paulo, Brazil – Three of the most acknowledged institutions in oncology – Hospital Sírio-Libanês (HSL), Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research – will celebrate next Friday, April 13, a strategic partnership to find new paths for treatment and research of cancer with a major event. Entitled ***Intersections – 1st International Cooperative Cancer Symposium*** and held in Sao Paulo, the event will last two days and bring together some of the leading Brazilian and foreign experts in oncology.

Among the 15 international physicians and investigators participating in the symposium, on April 13 and 14, will be the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research scientific director Andrew Simpson and the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center vice-president for International Programs Murray Brennan. Together with the Hospital Sírio-Libanês board and medical staff, they will begin activities directed toward the development of collaborative education, training and research programs in molecular oncology.

These initiatives will enable the HSL Cancer Center to intensify its activities in translational research and clinical trials for new drugs.

Joint collaboration built

The initial steps of the first cooperation agreement between the institutions occurred in late 2010, when HSL Cancer Center began to discuss projects of mutual cooperation with the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. The purpose was to develop collaborative education and training oncology programs, including joint symposiums, as well as to focus on clinical oncology, radiation therapy, research, and information technology.

According to HSL Cancer Center director Paulo Hoff "the relationship between the two institutions is being built based on mutual interest, medium and long-term results and focuses on professional training, scientific dissemination and support."

The partnership with the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research, in turn, has already resulted in the establishment of a Molecular Oncology Center, coordinated by Anamaria Camargo, Ph.D. Along with the research group of the Ludwig Institute for Genomics and Molecular Biology, Dr. Camargo has already moved to the Syrian-Lebanese Institute for Research and Education (IEP), where, since February, she has been the new study site coordinator.

Expansion of research

The Molecular Oncology Center aims to develop research to speed up advances in diagnosis, in the understanding of prognostic factors of different tumors, in the ability to predict response to treatments and in its own therapeutic resources. "The extensive experience of the Ludwig Institute in supporting research programs in cancer genetics and new drug development adds to HSL's excellence in cancer treatment, generating new perspectives for patients inside and outside the institution," says Camargo.

According to IEP research director Luiz Fernando Lima Reis, M.D., this partnership will allow an improved capacity to conduct new clinical trials and develop new translational research projects among the three institutions. "The Ludwig Institute already has a strong history and is an advanced international cancer research organization. Memorial Sloan-Kettering, in turn, is an important site for the development of new treatment approaches, mainly in immunotherapy. Therefore, we expect to benefit from broader range projects," adds Reis.

Protocols and tumor bank

The cooperation has already increased the course of research. According to the IEP director, there are several clinical research protocols in different types of tumors, usually the most prevalent in the population, such as breast, prostate, gastrointestinal, lung and central nervous system tumors. Trials also follow lines ranging from tumor sequencing and biology to bioinformatics.

The next step is to set up a tumor bank with the collaboration of oncologists and surgeons of the HSL clinical staff.

"The research will make treatments more effective. The idea is to improve efficiency, the ability to diagnose and treat patients. It is a win-win situation for the science, for the patients and for the society," highlights Reis.

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