

Events Bulletin

September 8, 2009

Upcoming Events

- 5th Annual Oncology Congress, September 24-26, San Francisco, CA
- PennCIGHT Symposium — October 9 (see p. 2)
- Ubiquitin Drug Discovery and Diagnostics 2009— October 13-14
- For more info on these and other events, go to <http://penncancer.org/events.cfm>

Inside this issue:

PennCIGHT Symposium	2
Seminars and So Forth	3
Funding Opportunities	4

Lifting Weights Reduces Lymphedema Symptoms Following Breast Cancer Surgery

Breast cancer survivors who lift weights are less likely than their non-weightlifting peers to experience worsening symptoms of lymphedema, the arm- and hand-swelling condition that plagues many women following surgery for their disease, according to new [University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine](#) research published in the August 13 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*. The findings challenge the advice commonly given to lymphedema sufferers, who may worry that weight training or even carrying children or bags of groceries will exacerbate their symptoms.

“Our study challenges the historical medical recommendations for women who get lymphedema after breast cancer, and is another example of

well-meaning medical advice turning out to be misguided,” says lead author [Kathryn Schmitz, PhD, MPH](#), an associate professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics and a member of Penn’s [Abramson Cancer Center](#). “For instance, we used to tell those who had back pain to rest, but we know now that in many cases, inactivity can actually make a bad back worse. Too many women have missed out on the health and fitness benefits that weight lifting provides, including building bone density. Our study shows that breast cancer survivors can safely participate in slowly progressive weight lifting and gain those benefits without any increase in their lymphedema symptoms. In fact, this type of exercise may actually help them feel better.”

(Continued on page 2)

OncoLink’s Vachani to Receive Honor Society of Nursing Award

In conjunction with its 40th Biennial Convention in late October, the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI) will present its prestigious 2009 Computer-Based Public Education Technology Award to Carolyn Vachani, RN, MSN, AOCN.

Vachani is being honored for her leading role in the creation of [OncoLink’s Cancer Survivorship Care Plan](#). This free service allows cancer survivors, their families and health care providers to create an individualized plan of care including information on potential aftereffects of chemotherapy and radiation treatments, fertility guidance and recommended screening guidelines.

The award recognizes individuals or groups who have promoted innovative and creative approaches of knowledge building, synthesis, utilization and dissemination through advanced technology to further the nursing profession and the health of the public in either practice or education.

“It is an honor to have a project that I have worked so hard on, recognized by my colleagues

as an important contribution to the education of cancer survivors,” Vachani says. “In addition, this project is for and about improving the lives of cancer survivors, and will be a powerful vehicle to bring much needed survivorship information to the nursing community in all specialties that provide care to these survivors.”

Vachani received her undergraduate degree from West Chester University and her Masters degree from the University of Pennsylvania. She has worked in the areas of medical hematology and oncology, bone marrow transplant, clinical research, radiation therapy and staff development. In her current role, she serves as the nurse educator for OncoLink, the Abramson Cancer Center’s award-winning cancer information website, which receives an average 3.9 million page views a month. She serves as the project leader in the development and maintenance of the LIVESTRONG Care Plan, a partnership which was launched in the spring of 2009 to bring the OncoLife survivorship care plan to more cancer patients around the world.

SOURCE: Penn Medicine

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Exercise Eases Lymphedema in Breast Cancer Patients

(Continued from page 1)

In the largest study to date to examine the impact of weight training on this sometimes debilitating, incurable condition, Schmitz's team enrolled 141 breast cancer survivors with a current diagnosis of lymphedema. Half were assigned to a weight-lifting group that participated in small-group, twice-weekly, 90-minute exercise classes for 13 weeks. During that time, with guidance from trained fitness instructors in community fitness centers in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware, the women worked up to greater resistance and more sets of weightlifting exercise. For the next 39 weeks, the women continued twice-weekly unsupervised exercise, with trainers calling to check in on women who missed more than one session per week. The women wore a custom-fitted compression garment on their affected arm during their workouts, and each week were asked about changes in symptoms. Their arms were measured monthly to ensure any changes were noted as soon as they occurred. The 70 control group participants, meanwhile, were asked not to change their exercise level during study participation.

During the course of the study, women in the weightlifting group experienced fewer exacerbations of their condition, and a reduction in symptoms compared to the women who did not lift weights. There were 19 women in the control group who experienced lymphedema exacerbations that required treatment from a physical therapist, compared to 9 in the treatment group. The proportion of women who experienced an increase of five percent or more in their limb swelling was similar in both groups -- 11 percent

of the weight-lifting group and 12 percent in the control group. The researchers theorize that a controlled weightlifting program may have protective benefits, by boosting strength in affected limbs enough to ward off injuries from everyday activities that can aggravate lymphedema symptoms.

“Our study shows that participating in a safe, structured weight-lifting routine can help women with lymphedema take control of their symptoms and reap the many rewards that resistance training has on their overall health as they begin life as a cancer survivor,” Schmitz says. “We did the intervention in community fitness centers deliberately, in the hope that positive results seen in our study would continue to be available to breast cancer survivors long beyond the end of the research study.”

It is recommended that women start with a slowly progressive program, supervised by a certified fitness professional, in order to learn how to do these types of exercises properly. Women with lymphedema should also wear a well-fitting compression garment during all exercise sessions. The new research was conducted in partnership with YMCAs in Philadelphia, Montgomery and Delaware Counties in Pennsylvania and in Burlington County in New Jersey, as well as Sisters-In-Shape Fitness in Philadelphia. Staff at the Edison-Metuchen YMCA in New Jersey have also been trained to deliver this intervention.

The research was supported by grants from the National Cancer Institute and the National Center for Research Resources.

SOURCE: Penn Medicine

PennCIGHT Symposium

Penn Center for the Integration of Genetic Healthcare Technologies (PennCIGHT) Second Annual Symposium

“Is Personalized Medicine in Your Future?”

Friday, October 9

8:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

Harold Prince Theater, Annenberg Center 3680 Walnut Street

The University of Pennsylvania Center for the Integration of Genetic Healthcare Technologies ([Penn CIGHT](#)) is one of six national [Centers of Excellence](#) for research on the Ethical, Legal, and Social Implications ([ELSI](#)) of genetics and the

human genome. The goal of the Penn CIGHT is to develop tools that will help consumers, professionals, policy makers and insurers understand and cope with the scope of certainty and uncertainty that the application of genetic technologies engender. The work of the center is conducted by teams of experts representing a broad range of disciplines, such as medicine, bioethics, law, behavioral and social sciences, public policy, economics, and research in genetics, genomics, and health services.

View the complete list of speakers and register online at: <http://www.med.upenn.edu/penncight/>.

Seminars and So Forth

Tuesday 9/8/09 12:00 pm

AFCRI/Hem-Onc Seminar Series

"Using Cell Reprogramming to Detect and Combat Pancreatic Cancer." Kenneth S. Zaret, PhD, Professor, Department of Cell and Molecular Biology; Associate Director, Institute for Regenerative Medicine, PENN SOM
CRB Austrian Auditorium

Tuesday 9/8/09 4:00 pm

CHOP CCCR Oncology Seminar Series

"Alternative phase I endpoint and trial design to define the optimal dose of the IGF-1R antagonist, R1507, in children." Rochelle Bagatell, MD, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, CHOP/Penn
123C Abramson Research Center, CHOP

Wednesday 9/9/09 4:00 am

Wistar Institute Lecture Series

"INK4/ARF Function and Melanomagenesis." Norman Sharpless, MD, Associate Professor, UNC School of Medicine - Chapel Hill
Grossman Auditorium, 36th and Spruce Streets

Thursday 9/10/09 4:00 pm

The Mari Lowe Center for Comparative Oncology Seminar Series

"Wiring the Intracellular Signaling Circuitry: Issues about Plasticity and Specificity." Anning Lin, MD, PhD, Ben May Department for Cancer Research,

The University of Chicago
Room 132 Hill (Allam Conference Room), 380 S. University Ave, School of Veterinary Medicine

Monday 9/14/09 12:00 pm

Path and Lab Medicine Grand Rounds Seminar Series

Maria Limberis, PhD, Research Assistant Professor, Pathology & Laboratory Medicine, PENN SOM
CRB Austrian Auditorium

Tuesday 9/15/09 4:00 pm

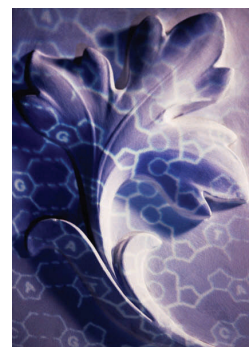
Immunology Colloquium

"A biochemical view of the host-pathogen interface: new tools." Hidde Ploegh, PhD, Member, Whitehead Institute, Professor of Biology, MIT
CRB Austrian Auditorium

Tuesday 9/15/09 5:00 pm

SPORE in Skin Cancer Talk Series

"Congenital melanocytic nevi and Neurocutaneous melanosis." Kara Shah, MD, PhD, University of Pennsylvania
Grossman Auditorium, 36th and Spruce Streets



\$3.5M Raised to Fight Cancer at the Philly LIVESTRONG Challenge

The Lance Armstrong LIVESTRONG™ Challenge (cycle, run, walk) was held in Blue Bell Pennsylvania, Saturday, August 22, 2009 and Sunday, August 23, 2009.

Over 6,500 people, including many cancer survivors, participated in this year's Challenge. Penn Medicine Honorary co-chairs **Craig B. Thompson, MD** - Director, Penn's Abramson Cancer Center and **John Maris, MD** - Chief, Division of Oncology at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, led the thirty member Penn team which contributed over \$10,000 to the \$3.5 million raised in total.

Penn's Living Well After Cancer™ Program hosted a "power stop" where thousands of cyclists stopped to rest and refuel.

Special thanks are owed to the faculty, staff and 25 volunteers at the Power Stop, who provided rest, refreshments, massage and medical atten-

tion to thousands of riders. Dr. Ronald Bernardin performed FREE skin cancer screenings on Saturday at the athlete's village.

For a slideshow of images of a fantastic day, go to <http://www.penncancer.com/slideshows/livestrong09.html>.

The LIVESTRONG™ Challenge is the Lance Armstrong Foundation's signature fundraising event which benefits the Lance Armstrong Foundation and Penn's LIVESTRONG™ Survivorship Center of Excellence Living Well After Cancer™ Program for adults and childhood cancer survivors. Penn's Living Well After Cancer™ Program is the only LIVESTRONG™ Cancer Survivorship Center of Excellence in the region. This status reflects our excellence in clinical care, research and education for adults and childhood cancer survivors.

SOURCE: Abramson Cancer Center

ABRAMSON CANCER
CENTER OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF
PENNSYLVANIA

1620 Penn Tower
3400 Spruce St.
Philadelphia, PA 19104-4283

Phone: 215-349-8386
Fax: 215-349-8299

Email: rjen@exchange.upenn.edu

[http://
pennhealth.org/
abramson](http://pennhealth.org/abramson)



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Send items for publication to:

Jennifer McGuire, Editor

rjen@exchange.upenn.edu

215-349-8386

Funding Opportunities

PA-09-253 Image-guided Drug Delivery in Cancer (R01)

DEADLINE: [Standard dates](#) apply.

This Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA), issued by the National Cancer Institute (NCI), encourages innovative translational research in the development of quantitative *in vivo* imaging characterization of image-guided drug delivery (IGDD) in cancer, including characterizations of the target, delivery validation, and therapy response. This FOA will support research in development of integrated imaging-based platforms for multifunctional and multiplexed drug delivery systems in cancer. Validation studies in non-human primates or large animal models and first in human studies directed towards translation of IGDD technology into the clinic will be considered appropriate for this FOA.

For further information and to apply, go to <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-09-253.html>

RFA-CA-09-026 The Biology of Estrogen Receptor-Negative Breast Cancer in Various Racial and Ethnic Groups (U01)

Letter of intent DEADLINE: 12/5/09

Application DEADLINE 1/5/2010

NCI will hold a pre-application teleconference on **Monday, September 28th** from 2-3 pm to which all prospective applicants are invited. NCI program and review staff members will make presentations to explain the goals and objectives of this initiative, discuss the application peer review process, and to answer questions from the attendees. An NCI Grants Management Specialist will be available to answer

financial questions. Participating in the teleconference is neither required nor necessary for a successful application. It is intended to be an opportunity to clarify the objectives of the initiative.

For update on this pre-application teleconference, please send an email to sathyamn@mail.nih.gov in the first week of September. Updated information will also be available on the Division of Cancer Biology website (<http://dcb.nci.nih.gov/>).

The purpose of this funding opportunity announcement (FOA) is to promote the systematic study of the biology of estrogen receptor (ER)-negative human breast cancers, the characterization of their molecular features, the signaling pathways and networks that support their growth, as well as to identify differences in the biology of ER-negative breast tumors among racial and ethnic groups. The information will be crucial in developing early detection and intervention strategies. This initiative will support studies on: the basic biology of ER-negative breast cancers and delineation of differences that exist between ER-positive and ER-negative breast cancers; the identification of the subtypes or heterogeneity that exist within ER-negative breast cancers; and the determination of whether the biology of ER-negative breast tumors differs across racial and ethnic groups. In order to address these goals, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) solicits applications from collaborative teams of interdisciplinary investigators focused on characterizing the biologic drivers, including genetic, epigenetic, molecular, and cellular factors, of ER-negative human breast cancer development and progression.

For further information and to apply, go to <http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-CA-09-026.html>.