A “Trojan Horse” to Battle Brain Cancer: Learn About Innovations at Jefferson

Physicians at the Jefferson Hospital for Neuroscience (JHN), the region’s only dedicated hospital for neurosciences, are tackling a particularly aggressive brain cancer that even surgery, chemotherapy and radiation often fail to treat. They are using a promising new immunotherapy to attack a patient’s tumor with their own cancer cells.

Starting in early 2012, the first of 12 patients diagnosed with a malignant astrocytoma from a clinical trial led by David Andrews, MD, Co-Director of the Brain Tumor Center of the Kimmel Cancer Center at JHN, will receive a “cancer Trojan horse” that could significantly shrink their tumors and possibly extend their lives.

Considering patients with malignant astrocytomas rarely live past four months, a new treatment method is highly needed.

Here’s how the immunotherapy works: the patient’s cancer cells are removed during surgery and then treated with a type of therapy that turns off a growth factor receptor, which plays a critical role in cell survival. Without it, cancer cells die.

Those same cells are then placed in a diffusion chamber (to keep the cells from spreading back into the body), re-implanted back into the patient within a day and then retrieved up to two days later — this is what makes it stand out from other immunotherapies. During their time in the body, those reinserted, extracted tumor cells communicate a message to the other tumor cells to die — and tell the body’s immune system to help do it. The clinical trial comes off the heels of successful animal research and a pilot study at Jefferson that uncovered its benefits 10 years ago. In that study, eight of 10 patients treated with the immunotherapy had significant tumor shrinkage. One man survived for eight years with no further treatment.

“The preclinical work and our own pilot study tell us that this novel treatment could have a significant impact on these cancer patients who don’t have many options,” Dr. Andrews said.

Jefferson Helps Newly Employed Access Health Services: Career Support Network Launches to Community

“This unique collaboration combines job-finding skills with health services to address the medical and emotional issues that often impede sustainable employment,” said James Plumb, MD, MPH, Director of the Center for Urban Health at Thomas Jefferson University. “Our healthcare team will teach healthy lifestyle behaviors related to common chronic diseases, as well as prevention and disease management in the community.”

The Federation of Neighborhood Centers, in partnership with the Center for Urban Health at Thomas Jefferson University and Hospitals, recently announced the Career Support Network (CSN), a transformative academic-community partnership which aims to address the interconnected employment and wellness needs of Philadelphia residents. This new collaboration will combine job-finding skills with health services to address the medical and emotional issues that often hinder employment for many individuals.

“The Career Support Network is designed to provide special tools to underserved, but newly-employed adults to enable them to remove or remedy these barriers and hold down a job over the long-term,” said Diane Connon-Levy, Executive Director of the Federation of Neighborhood Centers, an organization which promotes and strengthens neighborhood-based, multi-service agencies that serve low-income people in the Philadelphia region.

Philadelphia currently confronts an unprecedented employment crisis. Less than half of working-age adults in the city are employed; 40 percent of those who have jobs earn poverty wages, and 50 percent of low-skilled workers who find work are again unemployed within a year.

The CSN, a new holistic approach in Philadelphia, will be an integrated, one-stop program housed in two neighborhood centers, one in South Philadelphia and one in Fishtown/Kensington region of North Philadelphia, and will weave together occupational counseling, job retention training, peer support, and mental and physical health services.

Grateful Patient Celebrates 160 Miles of Progress with Jefferson

In November 2010, Rebecca Levenberg lost her left leg, due to a car accident, when she was hit while riding her bike. But instead of looking at November 9 as a bad day — the day she lost a leg — she decided to return to Jefferson and make it a day of celebration. To mark the one-year anniversary of the accident, Rebecca and her parents came to Jefferson to celebrate with her trauma team.

Together with the doctors, nurses and therapists who treated her, Rebecca walked “mile 160” around the Jefferson campus. Her goal is to walk 1,000 miles by November 9, 2012. See the full story on the Jefferson Hospitals website — see the The Daily Dose blog.

Reaching Out to Those in Need: School of Nursing FACT Students Help Adults with Disabilities

Students of the Jefferson School of Nursing’s FACT (Facilitated Academic Coursework Track) program are bringing their knowledge, skills and empathy to the region, volunteering as part of a service project at Camphill Village Kimberton Hills, in Chester County, Pennsylvania. The community of approximately 100 residents includes adults with developmental disabilities. Residents of the farming and handcrafting community, consisting of 432 acres, participate in a variety of duties, including planting crops, preparing plant beds, working in the gardens, feeding the chickens, collecting eggs, milking the cows and mucking stalls. There is also a large Arts and Crafts building with looms for weaving.

A unique feature of the Camphill community is that dedicated volunteers live and work together with those with special needs. On their first visit, the students helped the residents prepare beds for grapevines and the next visit, the group planted the grapevines in the beds.

“The overall experience was wonderful,” Chamaio Cheyenne-Rindge, President of FACT NSGA said, “Everyone there is so kind.”

More than 60 students have signed up to volunteer at the village in the future, so Chamaio hopes to make this a long sustaining relationship between the School of Nursing and Camphill Village.
An Exchange of Learning: TJU Hosts Medical Students from Rwanda

“The Jeff HEALTH (Helping Africa Link to Health) program exposes Rwandan medical students to intensive training beyond what is offered in Rwanda; and helps our students interested in careers in family medicine gain exposure to the health issues in other parts of the world,” says James Plumb, MD, MPH.

For almost 10 years, students and faculty from Thomas Jefferson University (TJU), including students from Jefferson Medical College (JMC) and the Schools of Nursing, Population Health and Health Professions, have traveled to Rwanda to understand the culture and provide assistance with the healthcare needs of the people of the village of Rugerero, a genocide-survivor village in Northwest Rwanda. Currently three Rwandan medical students are in Philadelphia to learn from Jefferson physicians and share the experience of being medical students with their American counterparts.

The Rugerero Survivors Village was built as a safe haven, a temporary home, for the thousands of Rwandans who had fled to the Congo to escape the genocide in early 1990s. The Village has grown and begun to prosper in the years since.

Since 2005 a total of 45 medical, nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and population health students from Jefferson have traveled to Rugerero and the rural community of Akarambi, north of the capital city of Kigali, to do their part in aiding the health needs of the Rwandan people. Approximately 15 students from the National University of Rwanda School of Medicine have come to Philadelphia to participate in two months of third and fourth year medical training at Jefferson Medical College and Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals since 2006.

“This program has our students thinking differently about the tremendous impact a primary care physician can have on the trajectory of a family, a village, or a country; and offers essential clinical and public health education and skills the Rwandan students can take home with them,” says James Plumb, MD, MPH, Professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine, Co-Director of the Center for Urban Health at Jefferson and faculty liaison for the program.

Musculoskeletal Oncology Center: Saving Limbs and Reducing Tumor Recurrence

The multi-disciplinary center at Jefferson functions as one of the nation’s few complete sarcoma centers. Studies have shown that patients with sarcoma who are treated at sarcoma centers have better overall outcomes than those who are not.

The Musculoskeletal Oncology Center at Jefferson’s Kimmel Cancer Center combines the expertise of the orthopedic surgeons of the Rothman Institute at Jefferson and oncology services at Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals (TJUH). Services at the Center include multi-disciplinary management of sarcoma by a highly experienced team of physicians. Orthopedic oncologist John Abraham, MD, collaborates with specialists in rehabilitation medicine, radiation oncology, medical oncology, pathology and musculoskeletal radiology.

In terms of surgical treatment, the Center is focused on providing the highest quality oncologic resections of extremity bone and soft-tissue malignancies while preserving function. In most cases, Dr. Abraham is able to perform surgery to save limbs so that patients can continue to maintain mobility.

Twenty-five years ago, amputation was a far more likely outcome for patients with a bone cancer. Today, however, says Dr. Abraham, a combination of advances in both surgical procedures and complementary non-surgical treatments like chemotherapy and radiation therapy allow him and his colleagues to completely remove tumors while preserving limbs, sparing significant surrounding healthy tissues, and maintaining a substantial amount of functional ability for patients.

Learn more about the advantages offered by Jefferson’s Musculoskeletal Oncology Center and other services the center provides. See the Orthopaedic Oncology Update published in a recent issue of Physicians News Digest. For more information or to make an appointment, please call 1-800-JEFF-NOW.
Voichita Bar-Ad, MD, an associate professor in the Department of Radiation Oncology at Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals, is one of the select few to be named an “Educator of the Year” by the Association of Residents in Radiation Oncology.

Carol Ann Gioia, RN, MSN, has been named Director of Nursing at Jefferson’s Methodist Hospital. In her new role, Carol will oversee the function, operations and staff of Methodist’s Department of Nursing and its ancillary departments, which includes the Department of Respiratory Therapy and the Dialysis Unit.

Leonidis Koniaris, MD, FACS, has been appointed Vice Chair of Surgery at Jefferson’s Methodist Hospital and Professor of Surgery at Jefferson Medical College of TJUH. Board certified in general surgery, Dr. Koniaris comes to Jefferson from the Department of Surgery at the University of Miami School of Medicine and specializes in hepatopancreato-biliary, cancer and general surgery. He will provide clinical services primarily at Methodist Hospital and will focus on research and teaching at both Methodist and Jefferson’s Center City campus.

The Health Care Improvement Foundation (HCIF) has named research and teaching at both Methodist and Jefferson’s Center City campus.

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The American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons dedicated their annual meeting in the fall to Lionel Gold, DDS, in recognition for his many contributions to the specialty. Dr. Gold is past Chair of the Dept. of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery.

Renato Izzo, MD, Professor of Pathology and Cell Biology, and Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, received an honorary degree (Doctor Honoris Causa) from Semmelweis University in Budapest, Hungary. Dr. Izzo received this award in recognition of his contributions to the field of Matrix Biology, Cancer and Angiogenesis.

Researchers at Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals have found that a carefully-selected surgical care check list of 12 measures reduced Whipple procedure wound infections by nearly 50 percent. Their study was published in the October 26 online issue of the Journal of Surgical Research.

Researchers at Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals and the Kimmel Cancer Center at Jefferson have shown that loss of the retinoblastoma tumor suppressor gene (RB) in triple negative breast cancer patients is associated with better clinical outcomes. This is a new marker to identify the subset of these patients who may respond positively to chemotherapy.

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The Health Care Improvement Foundation (HCIF) has named Thomas J. Lewis, TJUH President and CEO, its chair of the Board of Directors effective January 1. HCIF is dedicated to the vision that, through an engaged, collaborative community, the region benefits from a high-performing healthcare system demonstrating enhanced measures of safety, quality, and effectiveness.

Toby Mazer, MPH, Administrative Director, Stroke and Neuroscience Outreach, Department of Neurological Surgery at TJUH, has received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Delaware Valley Stroke Council (DVSC). Toby is also founder of the Council. He recently received accolades from Camden County Freeholders, the Pennsylvania State Senate and the New Jersey legislature, which has declared November 12, 2012, as Toby Rotman Mazer Day in Cherry Hill.

Vijay Rao, MD, is the newest member of the Radiological Society of North America Board of Directors. Dr. Rao will serve as the liaison-designate for annual meeting and technology. She is the David C. Levin Professor and Chair of Radiology at Jefferson Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University.

Get on Board with Heart Health! Jefferson Mobile Heart Screenings

See website for locations/dates in 2012. Search by zip code to find a screening near you.

Space is limited. Call or go online now to schedule your appointment. 1-855-912-8378 www.JeffersonHeart.org

Learn more about Jefferson research and news developments at www.JeffersonHospital.org/news

Timothy Showalter, MD, of the Department of Radiation Oncology, was named a new Young Investigator by the Prostate Cancer Foundation in 2011. He received the Ben Franklin Prostate Cancer Foundation Young Investigator Award for his ongoing investigation of the benefits of adjuvant radiation therapy after a radical prostatectomy and physician perceptions of the treatment option.

Cardiac surgery patients can benefit from preoperative aspirin therapy, find Jefferson and UC Davis researchers. Aspirin taken within five days of cardiac surgery is associated with a significant decrease in the risk of major postoperative complications.

A new study by a multi-site team including a Jefferson researcher shows that carotid artery stenting (CAS) following prior same-side carotid artery recanalization is safe, effective and results in lower incidences of in-hospital death, stroke and heart attack compared to first-time CAS for carotid artery stenosis. This study received “Best of Session” recognition at the American Heart Association in November.

Jefferson University Hospitals is one of a select number of medical centers nationwide offering a newly approved optical imaging agent for the detection of papillary carcinoma of the bladder in patients with known or suspected bladder cancer.

A new definition for periprosthetic joint infection and diagnostic criteria to better treat patients were developed and proposed by a Musculoskeletal Infection Society working group led by a physician at the Rothman Institute at Jefferson. The group used available research, much of which was conducted at Jefferson, to develop the new definition and criteria.

Jefferson University Hospitals is the first academic medical center to offer an FDA-approved BRAF mutation test for melanoma patients. The new diagnostic tool is part of Jefferson’s personalized approach to treating melanoma patients.

A recent study led by a Jefferson physician/researcher found no significant difference in the outcome for patients who received carotid artery stenting (CAS) at more than 30 days post-transient ischemic attack (TIA) or stroke versus those who received CAS at 30 days or less post-event. The research was presented at the American Heart Association annual meeting in November.


**JEFFCALENDAR**

**SEMINARS**

**Wednesday, February 15**

**Women's Health Update**
Suzette Flores, RSW, RN, MSN, CRNP, Nursing Practitioner, Dept. of Cardiology, TJIU, "Women in the Red Dress". 10:30 a.m., 15 Marianne Ritchie, MD, Clinical Assistant of Medicine, Division Of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, TJIU, "It's Springtime. It's Colonoscopy Time!" Thurs., March 22


**CONFERENCE**

**February 23 to 25**


**FORUMS**

**Wednesday, March 12, 2012**


**LECTURES**

**Wednesday, March 14**

Wills Eye Institute, Julian Dameron Perry, MD, Staff Surgeon, Clinical Assistant Professor, Division of Ophthalmology, JMC, "Coronary Heart Disease in Women," 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., 101 LSB.

**Friday, March 2**

**Neurosurgery**, Ravi Madineni, MD, Chairman, Division of Neurosurgery, JMC, "Late After-Onset: Genetic and Anatomical Issues Surrounding Unsuccessful Spinal Surgery," and Thurs., March 29: Resident CPC, noon to 1 p.m., DePamala.

**Wednesday, March 7**

**Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine**
Dr. D. Michael Scharf, TJUH, 7:30 to 8:30 p.m., Thursday Conference Room, 834 Walnut St. For information, call 215-955-1671.

**Thursday, April 5**

**Jefferson Kimmel Cancer Center, Symptoms and Pain**

**MEETINGS**

**Monday, February 13**

**TJUH Executive Committee of the Medical Staff**, 5:30 p.m., 636 Scott, Als., Mon., March 12 and April 9.

**Tuesday, February 21**

**TJUH Women's Board General Meeting**, 10 a.m., March 20: Executive Board Meeting, 9:30 a.m., General Board Meeting, 10 a.m. Also, April 17, Executive Board Meeting, 9:30 a.m., General Board Meeting, 10 a.m., 1645 Thompson.

**SPECIAL EVENTS**

**Saturday, February 11**

** Come to Jefferson's Heart Health Day**
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Lord & Taylor Court, King of Prussia Mall. Meet an expert and bring your questions about heart health to our "Ask Jefferson" booth - located near Starbucks.

**Monday-Friday,** 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Mon.–Fri.

**Wednesday, February 22**

**Schwartz Center Grand Rounds**, noon to 1 p.m., Room 101, Bluemle Life Sciences Building. (Subsequent sessions on the fourth Wednesday of each month.) Also, March 28 (101 LSB) and April 25, 2012 (Brent Hall).

**Monday, March 5**

**Parent Education**
Maternity Hospital Tour, 6 to 7 p.m., (promptly), lobby, Pavilion. Als., Weds., March 14, and April 11 and April 25; and 4th Wed. of every month. For more information, call 1-800-JEFF-NOW.

**Tuesday, March 6**

**WPNX Musicians On Call plays for Jefferson patients. Also on Weds., February 22 and March 29; Thurs., 7, 14, 21 and 28; April 4, 11, 18 and 25, 2012.**

**Wednesday, February 23**

**Parent Education, Childbirth - 3 night series**
3/5-3/19 (Mon.) and 3/6-3/12 (Wed.); 6 to 9 p.m. Location: 833 Chestnut, Suite 920. Registration is necessary. Fee $355/couples, $660. Call 1-800-JEFF-NOW to reserve your spot. Also, March 8 and March 19.

**Monday, February 27**

**Nursing Parent Education, "Basics of Breastfeeding"**

**Monday, March 5**

**Nursing Parent Education, "Childbirth - 3 night series"**
3/5-3/9 (Mon.) and 3/6-3/12 (Wed.). Cost: $20 for Employees and Guests. Also, April 6:

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**Saturday, February 25**

**Bible Study Class, noon, 207 College. All are welcome. Please contact Annette Chessen at 215-955-8991 for more information or e-mail annettechessonpayenos@gmail.com. Also, Wed., February 22 and March 29; March 7, 14, 21 and 28; April 4, 11, 18 and 25.**

**CLASSES**

**Sunday, February 12**

**Nursing, Parent Education, "One-Day Childbirth Class"**
8 a.m. to 5 p.m. RSVP needed. Also, Wed., March 7, Thurs., March 15, Wed., April 4 and Thurs. April 26.

**Monday, March 5**

**Nursing Parent Education, "Pediatrician - 2 morning series"**
8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. Location: 833 Chestnut, Suite 920.

**Parent Education, "Getting Ready for Babies," class**
Everything you wanted to know about your newborn baby. Also, March 8 and March 15.

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