

Oncology Exploration Elective

Course Director Dr. Samira Syed, MD; Alexa Wilden, MS2; Feroz James, MS2; Maishara Muquith, MS2; Sofia Yi, MS2

Department Division of Hematology-Oncology

Minimum: 10 students

Maximum: 20 students

Student Liaisons Alexa Wilden, MS2; Feroz James, MS2; Maishara Muquith, MS2; Sofia Yi, MS2

Requirements

- Attend 9 of 10 sessions
- Attend 1 of 2 tours

Rationale

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the United States, with men and women having a lifetime risk of 50% and 33% respectively of developing an invasive cancer.

(<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-basics/lifetime-probability-of-developing-or-dying-from-cancer.html>). Given the high incidence, morbidity, and mortality of cancer, it is inevitable that medical students will come across patients with cancer during their career. Furthermore, caring for cancer patients requires a multidisciplinary approach, requiring consideration of the social determinants of health and psychosocial care for patients and their loved ones. Thus, a pre-clerkship course dedicated to introducing students to oncology through a holistic manner would be invaluable. With the experiences acquired through this elective, students will be able to explore the field of oncology and apply these experiences to their future practice, regardless of their eventual specialty choice.

Objectives

- Gain exposure to the unique clinical and research fields of oncology
- Appreciate the non-pharmacological support provided to oncology patients
- Understand the social challenges of being an oncology patient
- Practice applying lessons on screening and management through case-based learning

Format: In-person unless otherwise notated on the schedule

Link for Zoom Events

<https://utsouthwestern-edu.zoom.us/j/93732797028?pwd=RXUydDN0SXRqOEJCbTRXV0xGQU81dz09>

Meeting ID: 937 3279 7028 Passcode: onc

Evaluation Grades will be pass/fail. Attendance at 9 sessions and 1 tour, and end-of-course survey is required to receive transcript credit for the course.

Schedule: Wednesdays 5-6pm unless otherwise notated in blue

Date	Time	Session	Location
September 1	5pm <i>Dinner will be served!</i>	Intro: Pathways in Hematology/Oncology	D1.100
September 8	In-Person Time TBD	Tour - Radiation Oncology	More information to come
September 15	5pm <i>Dinner will be served!</i>	Cancer Screenings	D1.100
September 22	5pm <i>Dinner will be served!</i>	Palliative Care and Social Work in Cancer	D1.100
September 29	5pm	Interpreting Clinical Data in Oncology	Virtual via Zoom
October 6	5pm <i>Taste-testing and food available!</i>	Nutritional Support of Cancer Patients	D1.100
October 13	5pm <i>Dinner will be served!</i>	Cancer Genetics Case-Based Learning	D1.100
October 20	In-Person Time TBD	Tour - Simmons Cancer Center	More information to come
October 27	5pm <i>Dinner will be served!</i>	Breaking Bad News	D1.100
November 3	5pm <i>Dinner will be served!</i>	Cancer and Kids	D1.100
November 10	5pm	Mock Tumor Board	Virtual via Zoom

November 17	5pm	Cancer Survivors Panel	Virtual Via Zoom
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Session 1: Introduction and Pathways in Oncology

Dr. Samira Syed, Division of Hematology/Oncology

Objectives

1. Understand the multidisciplinary approach to the management of cancer using an illustrative case.
2. Appreciate new developments and technologies in the field of oncology.
3. Assess the social determinants of health affecting cancer patients and treatment.
4. Discuss different pathways to a career in oncology.

Session 2: Tour of Radiation Oncology

Dr. Kiran Kumar, Radiation Oncology

Objectives

1. Participate in a guided tour of the UT Southwestern Radiation Oncology facility.
2. Learn about the instrumentation and technology provided by the department for both treatment and research.
3. Understand recent advances and clinical trials in radiation therapy for oncology.

Session 3: Cancer Screenings

Dr. Blake Barker, Associate Dean of Students

Objectives

1. Understand the clinical approach and procedure for screening patients for cancer.
2. Identify and interpret common signs and symptoms suggestive of malignancy.
3. Assess healthcare disparities impacting cancer screening accessibility.
4. Discuss community outreach methods for promoting access to and awareness about cancer screening.

Session 4: Palliative Care and Social Work in Cancer

Dr. Tamara McGregor, Family and Community Medicine

Objectives

1. Learn a brief history of palliative care.
2. Understand how and when palliative care plays a role in management of cancer.
3. Discuss ways palliative care supports both physical and mental health.
4. Appreciate the challenges of palliative care, such as communicating with family members.

Session 5: Interpreting Clinical Data in Oncology

Dr. John Cox, Division of Hematology/Oncology

Objectives:

1. Learn to interpret research articles for breakthroughs in clinical oncology.
2. Understand how clinical trials are set up and conducted.
3. Gain an understanding of commonly used statistical methods used in oncology trials such as hazard ratio, p-value, and confidence intervals.

Session 6: Nutritional Support of Cancer Patients

Ricardo Lopez, Isabella Ferrari, Nicole Haaf, Parkland Inpatient and Oncology Dieticians

Objectives:

1. Learn about the nutrition services offered by Parkland.
2. Understand the unique nutritional needs of cancer patients.
3. Understand the role of a nutritionist and dietician in cancer care.

Session 7: Cancer Genetics Case-Based Learning

Dr. Jason Park, Clinical Director of the Advanced Diagnostics Laboratory, Children's Health

Objectives:

1. Learn how genetic sequencing is used in:
 - a. Establishing risk for a family and individual
 - b. Assessing diagnosis, staging and prognosis of a new disease
 - c. Deciding treatment options and "personalized" medicine
2. Discuss a representative case that covers the above points.

Session 8: Tour of Simmons Cancer Center

Alexandra Hufmann, Support Services Manager, Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center

Objectives

1. Participate in a guided tour of the UT Southwestern Simmons Cancer Center.
2. Learn about the facilities and support services available to cancer patients at an NCI tertiary cancer center.
3. Appreciate the many non-medical needs of cancer patients and their families.

Session 9: Breaking Bad News

Dr. Carla Khalaf, Internal Medicine

Objectives

1. Appreciate the variety of conversations providers have with patients (the easy, the difficult, the ones where we must report medical errors or procedure complications, etc.)
2. Understand how to prepare for difficult conversations and who needs to be involved in these conversations.
3. Describe the variety of emotions a patient may express and how best to comfort them.
4. Discuss the challenges of managing one's own emotions as a provider when having difficult conversations.

Session 10: Cancer and Kids

Dr. Tanya Watt, Pediatric Hematology/Oncology

Objectives

1. Learn about the epidemiological/etiological differences between adult and pediatric cancers.
2. Compare and contrast cancer treatment, management, and challenges between children and adults.
3. Appreciate the challenges of finding new cancer treatments for children.
4. Compare and contrast the role of palliative care in pediatric and adult cancer management.

Session 11: Mock Tumor Board

Dr. Samira Syed, Division of Hematology/Oncology

Dr. Jonathan Dowell, Division of Hematology/Oncology and Program Director of UTSW Hematology Oncology Fellowship

Objectives

1. Participate in and learn about multidisciplinary approaches to evaluating individual patient cases and optimizing treatment.
2. Communicate and collaborate with others in different specialty roles to work as an effective interdisciplinary care team.
3. Discuss pathophysiologic characteristics and management strategies for a patient presenting with a tumor.

Session 12: Cancer Survivors Panel

Objectives

1. Understand the physical, emotional, and socioeconomic challenges of battling cancer.
2. Appreciate the importance of social support when battling cancer.
3. Learn how you can support cancer patients no matter the specialty you choose.