

## 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**

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

<b>November 17</b>	<b>5pm</b>	<b>Cancer Survivors Panel</b>	<b>Virtual Via Zoom</b>
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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.