

Jack Cuzick, PhD, to Receive 2023 SABCS William L. McGuire Memorial Lecture Award

Jack Cuzick, PhD, will be honored with the William L. McGuire Memorial Lecture Award at the 2023 San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium (SABCS). He is Head of the Cancer Prevention unit within the Centre for Prevention, Detection and Diagnosis and the John Snow Professor of Epidemiology at Queen Mary University of London. He is being recognized for his unparalleled contributions to the prevention and treatment of breast cancer and his commitment to transdisciplinary collaboration and leadership in the field.



JACK
CUZICK, PHD

“I am very honored to receive this award. It has been a long but immensely satisfying journey from pure mathematics to cancer prevention,” Cuzick said. “Substantial progress has been made, but breast cancer is still the most common cancer in women, and there’s a lot more to be done.”

Cuzick was one of the key investigators who designed the seminal ATAC (Arimidex, Tamoxifen, Alone or in Combination) trial, which established that the aromatase inhibitor anastrozole was more effective than tamoxifen in the adjuvant treatment of postmenopausal patients with estrogen receptor-positive (ER+) breast cancer. Based on these findings, Cuzick launched the IBIS-II trial to evaluate the preventive potential of anastrozole in women at high risk of breast cancer or with a diagnosis of ductal carcinoma in situ. This trial confirmed that anastrozole was more effective as a primary preventive agent than tamoxifen.

Appointment of Research Directors at Ironwood Cancer & Research Centers

Ramesh Ramanathan, MD, and **Mikhail Shtivelband, MD, PhD**, have been appointed as Research Directors at Ironwood Cancer & Research Centers.

Ramanathan is a board-certified medical oncologist, joining Ironwood as Medical Director of Clinical Research. He has served as a faculty member at Mayo Clinic and worked in cancer centers in Arizona and Pennsylvania. At Ironwood, he will provide expert consultations for gastrointestinal cancer patients.

Shtivelband has been an integral part of the Ironwood Cancer & Research Centers since 2004. Holding medical degrees and a PhD



RAMESH
RAMANATHAN,
MD

in Experimental Hematology from Russia, he completed his Internal Medicine Residency and Hematology and Medical Oncology fellowship at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. His commitment to the field is exemplified by his additional year spent in experimental research at MD Anderson.

“Dr. Ramanathan and Dr. Shtivelband are pivotal in propelling research forward for the benefit of our patients,” noted Parvinderjit Singh Khanuja, MD, FACP, President of Ironwood Cancer and Research Centers. “Their expertise and dedication support our mission of advancing academic cancer care within a community setting.”



MIKHAIL
SHTIVELBAND,
MD, PHD

Deborah K. Mayer Honored With ASCO’s Joseph Simone Quality Care Award

Deborah K. Mayer, PhD, RN, AOCN, FAAN, was awarded the Joseph Simone Quality Care Award and Lecture by ASCO. The award recognizes visionary oncology care providers who excel in quality care. Mayer will be the first nurse to receive this award.

Mayer is the Frances Hill Fox Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of North Carolina (UNC) School of Nursing, a member of the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center, and a Faculty Fellow at the M. Louise Fitzpatrick College of Nursing at Villanova University. She was formerly coordinator of the adult and gerontology nurse practitioner program at the UNC School of Nursing and Director of Cancer Survivorship at the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center.

As a pioneer in the field of cancer survivorship, Mayer has developed innovative interventions and programs to enhance the well-being of cancer survivors and their families and has also contributed to the advancement of cancer care delivery. She has had a distinguished career in oncology nursing, research, and advocacy. In addition, as a cancer survivor, she has unique insight into the needs and challenges of patients with cancer.

Mayer has served as the president of the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS), on the National Cancer Institute’s National Cancer Advisory Board (a Presidential appointment) and Board of Scientific Advisors, as Chair of the ASCO Survivorship Committee, and as a member of the original Cancer Moonshot Blue Ribbon Panel.



DEBORAH K.
MAYER, PHD,
RN, AOCN, FAAN

Abdul Rafah Naqash, MD, Co-Authors Research for New Treatment of Rare Cancer

Abdul Rafah Naqash, MD, Assistant Professor at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences, serves as co-author of a study published recently in the *New England Journal of Medicine* that details the success of the newly approved drug atezolizumab for the treatment of alveolar soft part sarcoma (2023; doi: 10.1056/NEJMoa2303383). The drug is an immunotherapy that prompts the body’s immune system to recognize and fight cancer cells.

The Division of Cancer Treatment and Diagnosis at the National Cancer Institute conducted the study, which was led by **Alice P. Chen, MD**, and **Elad Sharon, MD, MPH**. Naqash assisted with the study while he was a fellow at the NCI and continues researching treatments for alveolar soft part sarcoma (ASPS) at the OU Health Sciences Center.

The drug approval addresses the urgent need for a means of treating ASPS, an aggressive cancer with a poor survival rate. This rare sarcoma primarily occurs in adolescents and young adults with a global incidence of less than one person per 1 million

people. No effective treatments exist, and only 20-46 percent of people diagnosed with ASPS survive 5 years after learning they have the disease.

“Until now, no treatments were available that could lead to significant improvement in people with alveolar soft part sarcoma. This is also the first full approval of an immunotherapy drug for a rare type of sarcoma,” said Naqash, who is also a hematologist-oncologist at Stephenson Cancer Center.

In the study, tumors shrank in 37 percent of participants who received the drug; in one person, the drug appeared to eliminate the tumor. Participants continued to respond to the drug for approximately 2 years without their cancer growing or spreading. Researchers found no unusual side effects to the drug.



ABDUL RAFAH
NAQASH, MD

She also served as the Interim Director of the Office of Cancer Survivorship at NCI.

Mayer is a fellow of the American Academy of Nursing, has served as the Editor for the *Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing*, and has authored more than 200 cancer publications. She has received the ONS Lifetime Achievement Award and the Ellen L. Stovall Award from the National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship.

New Precision Medicine Center to Boost Single-Cell Biology Research

The creation of the Alfred E. Mann Single Cell Precision Medicine Center at Cedars-Sinai will accelerate single-cell biology research at the Board of Governors Innovation Center.

“[It] will propel groundbreaking research at the innovation center,” said Shlomo Melmed, MB, ChB, Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of the Medical Faculty. “Single-cell biology is a rapidly growing field in medicine, and Cedars-Sinai continues to position itself as an innovative leader in this exciting field, driving clinical innovation for our patients.”

The Mann Center will house laboratories where researchers will focus on the causes of developmental, neurological, immunological, cardiovascular, pulmonary, and gastrointestinal diseases, as well as develop curative treatments for patients diagnosed with these challenging illnesses.

Alfred Mann was a prolific inventor who dedicated his life to utilizing technology and innovation to improve health outcomes for millions of people. Some of his most renowned accomplishments include pioneering the development of pacemakers, insulin pumps, inhalable insulin powder, and cochlear implants for the deaf. During his lifetime, he founded 17 companies, all focused on bridging medicine and engineering.

Navid Hafez, MD, MPH, Leads Precision Medicine & Thoracic Malignancies Programs

Hematologist-oncologist **Navid Hafez, MD, MPH**, has joined The Angeles Clinic and Research Institute, an affiliate of Cedars-Sinai Cancer, as Director of Precision Medicine and Thoracic Oncology. He will focus on clinical research programs to develop molecular and targeted therapies to treat cancers of the chest cavity, including lung cancers. He also will provide care for patients with thoracic cancer.



NAVID HAFEZ,
MD, MPH

“We are pleased to welcome Dr. Hafez to The Angeles Clinic and Cedars-Sinai Cancer,” said Omid Hamid, MD, Chief of Translational Research and Immuno-Oncology at The Angeles Clinic and Research Institute, and Medical Director of the Cutaneous Malignancies Disease Research Group at Cedars-Sinai Cancer. “He employs innovative, biomarker-driven targeted and immune therapies to provide top-notch care to patients, and his work to advance the science of precision medicine through clinical trials will benefit patients beyond our institutions.”

Hafez said he was motivated to join the field of thoracic oncology because of the advances in science, the team approach to research and patient care, and the opportunity to care for patients.

“I enjoy working with patients across a range of life experiences, and that is readily seen in thoracic cancers, which can affect anyone,” he said. “Thoracic cancers, like the patients they affect, are diverse. Some require biomarker-driven molecular therapies, some benefit from immune-centered therapies, and some require a combination, and this gives us the opportunity to evaluate novel therapeutic strategies.”

Joseph H. Schwab, MD, MS, to Lead Center for Surgical Technology & AI Research

Joseph H. Schwab, MD, MS, an internationally recognized leader in the diagnosis and treatment of complex orthopaedic and spinal oncology conditions, has joined Cedars-Sinai as the new Director of Spine Oncology for Orthopaedic Surgery and the Director of the Center for Surgical Technology and AI Research.

“Dr. Schwab’s visionary leadership and profound impact on orthopaedic surgery make him an invaluable addition to our leadership team,” said Mark Vrahas, MD, Chair of Cedars-Sinai Orthopaedics. “His expertise aligns seamlessly with our mission to deliver exceptional patient care and to pioneer new frontiers in orthopaedic medical research.”



JOSEPH H.
SCHWAB, MD, MS

Schwab will lead the expansion of the spine oncology program, providing destination expert care for patients with challenging spine disorders. Under his direction, the Center for Surgical Technology and AI Research will foster interdisciplinary surgery discoveries as Cedars-Sinai advances the development of innovative AI and predictive algorithmic applications for complex spine and musculoskeletal oncology care.

“I am honored to join Cedars-Sinai and contribute to the advancement of spine oncology and surgical technology,” Schwab said. “Backed by an exceptional team and leading-edge facilities, we are ready to make groundbreaking strides in patient care, research, and innovation.”

Avi Srivastava, PhD, Joins the Wistar Institute as Assistant Professor

Avi Srivastava, PhD, now serves as Assistant Professor at the Wistar Institute’s Ellen and Ronald Caplan Cancer Center in the Wistar’s Gene Expression and Regulation Program.



AVI SRIVASTAVA,
PHD

“The opportunity to pursue my research at The Wistar Institute is invaluable,” Srivastava stated. “I’m excited to launch the Srivastava Lab at an institution renowned for its unwavering dedication to cancer research.” He brings expertise in advanced computational methods that can be used to establish powerful predictive research tools in cancer biology.

“We welcome Dr. Srivastava with great enthusiasm. His appointment to Wistar demonstrates our continued commitment to expanding our best-in-class research talent,” said Dario C. Altieri, MD, Wistar President and CEO, Director of the Ellen and Ronald Caplan Cancer Center, and the Robert and Penny Fox Distinguished Professor. “Computational biology is set to play a pivotal role in the future of biomedical research, and we are delighted to have Dr. Srivastava contribute his expertise to this critical field here at Wistar.” **OT**

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Signed: Stacy Drossner

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