Overview-Charles J. Yeo, MD

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Recommended Citation
(2009) "Overview-Charles J. Yeo, MD," Jefferson Surgical Solutions: Vol. 4 : Iss. 1 , Article 3.
Available at: http://jdc.jefferson.edu/jss/vol4/iss1/3

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The Spring of 2009 represents an exciting time here in the Department of Surgery. Despite the turbulent economic times, our clinical footprint has grown nicely, averaging a 5 to 12% increase per year for the last three years. Newer programs such as our minimally invasive esophagectomy and pancreatectomy programs, our bariatric surgery program, our mechanical heart support program, and our thriving acute care surgery (and intensivist) program are examples of success stories.

We have received good news on the research front. Our residents and faculty just completed a very busy Fall and Winter, when well over a dozen presentations were made at national fora, such as the Southern Surgical, the 4th Academic Surgical Congress, the Southeastern Surgical, and the American Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary Association, amongst others. Additionally, we are delighted to have recently been notified of major grant awards to Drs. Lanza-Jacoby and Tulenko, representing NIH dollars into the Department. Our clinical research has grown nicely, and the addition of Sharon Molotsky, RN, BSN, CCRC as our Clinical Research Nurse Project Manager will do much to ensure the attention to detail needed for our clinical trials.

My thanks go out to all members of the Department for their enthusiasm, hard work, clinical expertise and academic performance over the last several years. It has been wonderful to see Jefferson's stature rise amongst other academic medical centers, as we have added faculty, increased our clinical volumes, added new clinical programs, and raised the research profile (both for our basic science researchers and for our clinicians).
New faculty, upgrades to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), and new technology have served to enhance patient care. ‘This fully functional ICU will have the most advanced technology, tools and treatment available,’ says Dr. Martin, ‘so that we can respond to a patient’s needs, from pre- and post-operative care to bedside pressurization, under ideal conditions with the optimal equipment.’

As part of Jefferson’s commitment to continually improving the care and experience of patients, the hospital is building a new, state-of-the-art ICU facility on the Gilbert Building on Jefferson’s Center City Campus. Construction is expected to be completed during this year and will add to the existing ICU. The new space will accommodate 34 beds, half of which will be dedicated to surgical patients.

Dr. Joshua Court in the New Transplant Laboratory

Joshua Court, PhD, in a research fellowship in the lab of Cataldo Corso, MD, PhD, focusing on the regulation of tumor cell growth and death, primarily in the liver. He examines how molecular components of cellular signaling pathways function to regulate cell growth and cell death.

Dr. Court’s doctoral study investigated the activation of nuclear factor of vitamin D receptor in pancreatic cancer. His research and training in the lab of Dr. Martin have enabled him to continue his research in a new secondary position in the Department of Surgery. ‘I am continuing my work on pancreatic cancer cell growth control. Dr. Shahen reviewed her expertise in pancreatic cancer research and the role of p23 in pancreatic cancer tumor development. The research established that p23 is low or absent in poorly differentiated pancreatic cancer, it suppresses tumor growth when its expression is restored, and impacts the response of cancer cells to certain chemotherapies. Dr. Williams has published three peer-reviewed articles in this area, and the work has been accepted for publication in Surgery.

Dr. Susan Lanza-Jacoby’s laboratory is studying the effect of the immune system on the tumor microenvironment. Her research focuses on the expression of a protein, Osteopontin-C, which appears to have an aggressive nature of pancreatic cancer. Dr. Williams is analyzing how mutations in the patient’s genome can predict drug resistance and provide a basis for targeted therapy. Dr. Williams is interested in the proof of principle data for a proposed clinical trial. Dr. Williams’ work will help the Department of Surgery in designing clinical trials for Philadelphia’s Academic Surgery Section Meeting in February 2008. In Dr. Susan Landau’s laboratory, Dr. Matthew Rosen is studying the effect of Neutrinon, a natural Cox 2 inhibitor on pancreatic cancer cells, and the relationship of oncogenes (a protein involved in improving health during early complications) to pancreatic cancer. Dr. Rosen has already presented findings at two meetings including the American Association for Cancer Research and the American Society for Clinical Oncology. Her research focuses on the expression of a protein, Osteopontin-C, which appears to have an aggressive nature of pancreatic cancer. Her research focuses on the expression of a protein, Osteopontin-C, which appears to have an aggressive nature of pancreatic cancer. Her research focuses on the expression of a protein, Osteopontin-C, which appears to have an aggressive nature of pancreatic cancer.