Faculty Spotlight:

Richard T. Hoppe, MD
Henry S. Kaplan-Harry Lebeson Professor of Cancer Biology
Radiation Oncology - Radiation Therapy

Summary of Work

Dr. Richard Hoppe, master clinician, brilliant researcher, and beloved educator and mentor, continues to make an indelible mark on the world by advancing cancer management and patient care. The impact of his professional contributions are beyond quantification; they have affected not only Stanford's patients, physicians, and researchers, but also the broad national and international oncologic network. Dr. Hoppe has dedicated his professional life to clinical oncology, in particular radiation oncology, by focusing his leadership talent and skills in the area of the malignant lymphomas, to the benefit of multitudes and generations of patients, colleagues, and trainees.

When Dr. Hoppe joined Stanford in 1972 as a post-doctoral radiation oncology resident, the understanding of the biology and management of Hodgkin's lymphoma, a cancer of the lymphatic system, was in its infancy. Only a decade earlier, a diagnosis of Hodgkin's disease, as it was called at the time, was often terminal. Today, thanks in large part to a team of Stanford physicians and scientists, it is one of the most treatable and curable forms of cancer.

Shortly after Hodgkin's disease was initially described in the early 1900s, physicians found that the newly discovered x-rays were an effective treatment option; early reports heralded x-rays as almost magical. But those results were often short-lived. Inevitably after x-ray exposure, the cancer would return. When higher-energy x-rays became available, physicians and researchers refined the treatment, and success rates rose dramatically. But the real breakthrough was yet to come.

In 1956, Stanford faculty, Henry S. Kaplan, MD, and Edward Ginzton, MD partnered to create the first medical linear accelerator delivering radiation therapy on the western hemisphere. And in 1962, Dr. Kaplan and oncologist, Saul Rosenberg, MD began using the linear acceleartor combined with chemotherapy to treat Hodgkin's disease, an apporach that dramatically improved patient survival. More than six decades and many thousands of patients later, the linear accelerator remains the backbone of radiation therapy for cancer worldwide. Roughly, half of all cancer patients receive radiation therapy, primarily from the rays generated by a linear accelerator. It was this extraordinary and exciting environment that Dr. Hoppe stepped into as a young resident trainee; he has faithfully carried the astonishing Stanford legacy forward along an impressive journey. Henry Kaplan would be so very proud to know of Dr. Hoppe's accomplishments and successes.

"I characterize the linear accelerator as one of the most important examples of translational research that has occurred at this institution and around the world. It's integration in patient care at Stanford has been transformational and has impacted countless lives."

Richard Hoppe, MD

Dr. Hoppe was one of the first to recognize and report the importance of understanding the consequences of dose and volume of radiation. With the advent of better treatments, survival rates were markedly increasing. Patients, particularly those with Hodgkin's lymphoma, were living longer, so it became imperative to minimize adverse consequences of radiation. Leading a series of landmark sequential clinical studies, he pioneered the idea of using more limited radiotherapy fields and lower doses of radiation, integrated with chemotherapy, in a series of risk-defining investigations. These principles have revolutionized the treatment of all lymphomas, and hundreds of thousands of lives have been saved because of Dr. Hoppe's work. In the past two decades, he has contributed effort to the development of guidelines through the National Cancer Center Network for the treatment of the lymphomas. These guidelines have been used world-wide for making treatment decisions.

His attention has also focused on a smaller set of patients: those with the rare cutaneous T-cell lymphoma. Annually, only about 1,500 Americans are diagnosed with the disease, which affects T-lymphocytes, the immune cells that normally circulate through the blood to help fight invading pathogens. However, in cutaneous T-cell lymphoma, the lymphocytes grow uncontrollably within the skin.

As co-founder of Stanford's Interdisciplinary Cutaneous Lymphoma Clinic, Dr. Hoppe helped develop the current treatment regimens. While some lymphomas can be treated with a focused beam of ionizing radiation delivered at a small tumor site, cutaneous lymphoma may affect wide areas of skin. More than 60 years ago, Stanford physicians found a way to scatter electrons to treat a broader area, and the "Stanford Total Skin Radiation Technique" was developed. Dr. Hoppe and his colleagues continue to optimize this effective treatment. They have recently reduced the standard radiation dose and treatment size. For some specific patients, this option may be just as effective at killing cancerous T-cells, and can be used more often.

Another of Dr. Hoppe's research interests has been on the immunosuppressive effects of radiation. He was involved from the very beginning in clinical trials using "total lymphoid irradiation" combined with systemic treatment to induce transplantation tolerance, a program that has been adopted as a standard one by the Stanford Bone Marrow Transplant program for certain types of bone marrow transplantation. This approach is also being used to establish tolerance in kidney transplantation, such that patients are able to discontinue treatment with immunosuppressive drugs.

Biography

Dr. Hoppe's illustrious career includes serving as the chair of the Department of Radiation Oncology at Stanford for 19 years, and authoring more than 300 research articles and 100 book chapters on Hodgkin's disease, lymphomas, radiation immunosuppression and radiation late effects. Under his leadership, both young and seasoned faculty benefited from his wisdom.

Dr. Hoppe earned his medical degree at Cornell University School of Medicine before completing residency at Stanford University in radiation oncology.

He is board certified in Radiation Oncology and Therapeutic Radiology by the American Board of Radiology.

A truly valued, respected individual, Dr. Hoppe has brought a deep level of care and compassion to each patient he has treated and contributed greatly to the field of radiation oncology and lymphoma in his 44 years at Stanford. A true leader with a gentle demeanor, people around the world have benefitted greatly from Dr. Richard Hoppe's shrewd knowledge, compassion and care.

The Request: Philanthropic Support

With over a fifty year history of innovation, the Stanford Lymphoma Program has been at the forefront of research and discovery for both adults and children. From the advent of the linear accelerator to clinical trials focused on CD47 to the analysis of ctDNA in the blood to advance treatment options and therapies, Stanford has, and continues to be a leader in the field of lymphoma. In honor of Dr. Richard Hoppe and in celebration of Stanford's tremendous contribution to the field, a visionary gift to support a future leader is requested.

Endowed Faculty Scholar in honor of Dr. Richard Hoppe $2,000,000

The endowed faculty scholar will fuel lymphoma research from the most promising cancer scientists at the single most critical juncture of their careers—shortly after completion of their training, when they are at the peak of productivity and creativity. As physician-scientists, these individuals are highly sought-after by all institutions. The endowed faculty scholar is critical in attracting the best and brightest in the field of lymphoma. As an endowment, this position creates an enduring legacy for the donor—and the opportunity to associate closely with the work and achievements of the holders. The endowed faculty scholar is the highest philanthropic gift that a junior faculty can hold and a testament to their potential impact in medicine.

Radiation Oncology Lymphoma Research Fund in honor of Dr. Richard Hoppe $1,000,000

As a leader in the field, Dr. Hoppe has set the stage for future breakthroughs and novel therapies for his patients, and those around the world. This fund will provide the resources necessary to pursue new projects or accelerate current investigations focused on lymphoma. Gifts to this area will provide discretionary, expendable funding to fuel promising research in cancer detection, treatment and prevention, and shape the future of patient care. This level of support is important to advance research and generate the necessary data to qualify to apply for additional funding from federal sources. In addition to research, this fund can benefit fellows, post-doctoral researchers, clinical research assistants, and laboratory materials. It is a crucial component in securing Stanford's positon as a leader in the field of lymphoma as it will provide the funds necessary to further advance the foundation Dr. Hoppe has laid.

Awards and Honors highlights:

Gold Medal of ASTRO

Janeway Lecturer for the American Radium Society (ARS)

Gold Medal of the ACR and the inaugural Gold Medal of the ARS

Karl Musshoff Prize for Clinical Research from the German Hodgkin Lymphoma Study Group and the Rodger Winn Award for expert judgement and commitment to excellence in the service of from the National Cancer Center Network (NCCN)

Delivered the E. Richard King Memorial Lecture, Philip Rubin Lecture at the International Congress of Radiation Oncology in Beijing, Richard G. Evans Memorial Lecture, Jerry Vaeth Lecture, Radiation Oncology Oration at the Radiological Society of North America, Vera Peters Lecture, the Martin Schneider Memorial Lecture, John Ultmann Lecture at the International Symposium on Hodgkin lymphoma, Franz Buschke Lecture, and the Ho Hung-Chiu Medical Foundation Lecture in Hong Kong

Recipient of the Henry S. Kaplan Memorial Prize for Teaching and the ARRO (Association of Residents in Radiation Oncology) Educator of the Year Award

Honorary Professor at the Shantou University Medical College.

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