

## **ABSTRACT: 2018 ELAM Institutional Action Project**

**Project Title:** Functional Integration of Basic, Translational and Clinical Trial Research of the Adult and Pediatric Brain Tumor Centers (BTCs) at the University of Cincinnati (UC) and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center (CCHMC)

**Name and Institution:** Maryam Fouladi, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center (CCHMC), University of Cincinnati (UC)

**Collaborators and Mentors:** Bill Ball, MD; Peggy Hostetter, MD; Nick Marko, MD; Joseph Cheng MD; Richard Lu, PhD; David Plas PhD;

**Topic Category:** Research

**Background, Significance of project:** The adult and pediatric BTCs serve a large population of patients with brain tumors at UC and CCHMC, respectively. Both centers have significant efforts in, and infrastructure for, basic, translational and clinical trials research. Integration of research endeavors across the spectrum of adult and pediatric brain tumors will a) provide a comprehensive and expanded portfolio of novel clinical trials for all brain tumor patients; b) reduce duplication of efforts, positions and costs for conduct of basic and clinical research, and c) will position the BTCs as an important component of the strategic initiative at UC to attain NCI Comprehensive-Cancer Center designation in 2020.

**Purpose/Objectives:** To functionally integrate basic, translational and clinical trials research in the adult and pediatric BTCs and establish a national Brain Tumor Center of Excellence.

**Methods/Approach/Evaluation Strategy:** Interviews with key stake holders from both institutions were conducted to develop a unified vision and implementation plan. Priorities identified included: a) establishment of joint Brain Tumor Research meetings to facilitate collaboration; b) Cross representation of BTC leaders in the steering committees of both BTCs; c) Regular meetings of the clinical and scientific directors of both BTCs to ensure efficient implementation of the joint agenda; d) Integration and streamlining of clinical trials endeavors to optimize patient access, referral, recruitment and enrollment; e) development of novel, scientifically-rational clinical trials for brain tumor patients of all ages; joint: f) research retreat; g) faculty recruitment; and g) research grants.

**Outcomes/Results:** Bimonthly joint brain tumor research meetings began in February 2018. Dr. Marko (UC BTC Director) and I have joined the steering committees of both BTCs and co-lead this endeavor. Bimonthly meetings began in February 2018 among the 4 scientific and clinical directors of the BTCs to advance our agenda efficiently. The Clinical Trials Office managers of both BTCs meet regularly sending weekly updated list of open BTC clinical trials to all faculty of the BTCs. A patient navigator (adult BTC) and a project manager (pediatric BTC) meet regularly to optimize and facilitate referrals, consultations and enrollment on clinical trials across both BTCs. Faculty from both BTCs will attend weekly tumor board meetings to discuss therapeutic options available for all patients. A joint research retreat is planned for May 2018. Faculty candidates for new positions within the BTCs are interviewed by faculty from both BTCs. Joint recruitment of a cancer bioinformatician is planned for 2018. Research collaborations have been established among investigators and joint grants submissions are planned for late 2018.

**Discussion/Conclusion with Statement of Impact/Potential Impact:** Successful implementation of this plan will lead to improved access and availability of cutting edge early phase clinical trials for brain tumor patients of all ages, leading to increased patient recruitment to the BTCs and improved trial enrollment across the board. Integration and enhancement of collaborative brain tumor research endeavors, joint publications and grant funding, will allow the integrated BTC to play an important role in the UC application for NCI Comprehensive Cancer Center Designation in 2020.