

Getting Into the Biology of **PROSTATE** CANCER

► *Dr. Margaret Yu, VP, Disease Area Leader Prostate Cancer, Janssen Research and Development, discusses her efforts to further the understanding of the biology of prostate cancer.*

PV: Please tell us about your journey to become one of the leading experts in the field of prostate cancer.

DR. YU: Early in my career I worked as a physician within the VA where I spent the first two years of practice caring directly for men who had metastatic prostate cancer. That, in part, really sparked my interest in developing more options and better treatment options for patients. At that time, men with prostate cancer had fewer treatment options than they do today and certainly the understanding of the biology of prostate cancer was at a much earlier stage. That was true not just in prostate cancer, but the entire field of oncology. I knew that to really have an impact on as many patients as possible and to continue to provide hope to patients, I needed to do research. This led me to R&D, and ultimately I joined Janssen as a clinical researcher and I am now the VP and disease area leader for prostate cancer at Janssen R&D. My primary responsibility is choosing the science discovered at the bench to go into clinical development for prostate cancer.



Margaret Yu, M.D.

PV: As part of your research, what have you learned about prostate cancer?

DR. YU: Prostate cancer is a fascinating disease. It is the second-most common cancer in men, and it remains a disease of unmet need. The reason why it's fascinating from a scientific perspective is that the male hormone plays a big role in the disease. It's a complicated disease. And while we've made lots of advances in treating it, we're still trying to figure out how to best translate the differences in tumor biology from one patient to the next patient and develop personalized care for each patient based on that understanding. I don't think it's enough to find a medicine that could extend progression-free survival. That medicine also has to be well-tolerated, maintain quality of life, and be convenient for patient.

PV: What do you think are some of the biggest barriers in bringing a more effective prostate cancer treatment to market?

DR. YU: Well, some of it is technical. Prostate cancer, like I said, has a different biology for every patient. At times it takes quite a long time for the disease to actually metastasize. Also, the cancer is very localized. It takes a long time to show the affect of the disease. Some of the barriers in getting a drug approved is how long some of these clinical trials take.

PV: What type of research do you believe is needed to achieve a cure?



DR. YU: To achieve a cure in prostate cancer, we really need to focus more on clinical trials in the early disease setting. We're doing some of this in Janssen by developing some of our androgen-receptor or AR-targeted agents in localized prostate cancer patients considered to be high risk for metastasis.

PV: What type of research are you working on specifically right now?

DR. YU: We're very interested in reactivating the patient's own immune system to attack the tumor. There are several ways that we do this. We do this biologically, via cellular therapy, and through vaccines.

PV: What impact are hormone therapies having on treatment now?

DR. YU: Hormone therapies are allowing patients with metastatic disease to live longer. Newer hormone treatments are approved for the later disease settings, and now we are developing them for early disease settings where the disease is localized for a shorter duration of time to see if we can achieve a cure.

PV: As you look to the future in terms of the treatment of this specific cancer, what is your hope?

DR. YU: My hope for the future of prostate cancer is that we'll be able to develop very specific therapies to treat each type of cancer. Just like in breast cancer where there are different types of the cancer based on the hormone receptor status, in prostate cancer we have very similar segments; we're just at an earlier stage of understanding this relationship. **PV**

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