Translational research in oncology comes timely

L.W.C. Chow *, M. Toi

Organisation for Oncology and Translational Research

Translational research is becoming more and more important in oncology. However, its accepted role in medicine is still not completely defined. Despite the diversity in opinions on its definition, its prime objectives of bridging the gap between clinical and basic sciences and bringing the discovery of application to the practice of medicine remain the most critical prospects of translational research.

Translational research either starts with a clinical problem needing a solution or a discovery in the laboratory on a specific aspect in oncology pending testing in the clinics. The conception of an idea which leads to an important scientific discovery can only be put into clinical practice through different steps in translational research, from retrospective analysis through proof-of-concept studies to confirmatory studies. During the process, novel diagnostics and novel therapeutics are developed. These two major developmental areas are often inter-related and their associations often bring new paradigms in the management of cancer patients. Therefore, translational research is a crucial element in clinical trials and, in particular, prospective randomised clinical trials. It may eventually accelerate the development of new methodologies and improve the trial efficiency.

It is with the above objectives that the Organisation for Oncology and Translational Research (OOTR) was established. The focus of bringing the cutting edge laboratory research to the clinics and understanding some of the important clinical problems in therapeutics with laboratory technologies will become the primary task of the Organisation. However, to achieve this goal, more translational researchers, both from the basic and clinical sciences, are needed. In addition, there should be a forum for these researchers to interact. In this regard, the First Annual Conference of OOTR was held in October 2004. This is the one of the first conferences of such kind to be held in Asia. The theme was on angiogenesis and cyclo-oxygenase inhibition in the management of cancer. Both are important and hotly pursued topics in oncology. The forum is well attended and it provides an opportunity for Asian and other investigators to exchange views on cancer and to foster closer collaboration in future both within and without the region.

* Corresponding author.
E-mail address: lwcchow@hkucc.hku.hk (L.W.C. Chow).

© 2005 Elsevier SAS. All rights reserved.