

Director's Note



Every year, the Center for Cancer Research (CCR) makes remarkable contributions to the understanding, detection, treatment and prevention of cancer. The CCR scientists and staff publish approximately 2,000 scientific papers per year, run more than 200 clinical trials and care for hundreds of cancer patients in the National Institutes of Health Clinical Research Center. Each published study and clinical trial is a step forward on our journey to alleviate the burden of cancer.

Progress in cancer research often comes in unanticipated areas. As history has shown, it is difficult to predict how an individual discovery will contribute to future progress. Who would have thought that the basic exploration years ago of how the immune system works would one day lead to immunotherapy, one of today's most promising weapons in the fight against cancer? It is essential that research institutions create an environment where the unexpected is expected and where new areas of exploration can be freely pursued by its scientists. In CCR, we pride ourselves on our culture of creating an environment where the most important and difficult problems in cancer biology can be fearlessly pursued by our investigators.

In this magazine, we highlight some of the milestones CCR investigators have reached in the last year on the road to mitigating the dire consequences of cancer. The collection of research highlights presented here only scratches the surface of the many advances made by CCR scientists, but they showcase the broad spectrum of our activities and the ingenuity of our scientists. Be it groundbreaking methods to visualize the structure of proteins and RNAs that help us understand their function and allow us to design specific drugs, be it the molecular characterization of kidney cancer that will pave the way to new treatment approaches, or be it imaging methods that provide unprecedented precision in detection of prostate cancer, each of these are the result of daring and groundbreaking research that will ultimately benefit cancer patients. Through efforts like these, we are leading the cancer community in developing innovative approaches to clinical studies while also contributing to shaping the next generation of the biomedical workforce through our commitment to excellent training programs.

We are proud to have reached some critical milestones this year—but the journey goes on. All of us at CCR are committed to continuing the march towards our common goal of making cancer a preventable, curable and manageable disease.

Tom Misteli