UCSF Prostate Cancer Program Awarded SPORE Grant by National Cancer Institute

Researchers will investigate aggressive prostate cancer from a mechanistic, biomarker and therapeutic perspective, with a goal of accelerating clinical innovation through translational research.

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The UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center announced today that the UCSF Prostate Cancer Program is the recipient of the National Cancer Institute's (NCI) Specialized Programs of Research Excellence (SPORE) grant for prostate cancer. The program will receive about $7 million to develop new approaches to the prevention, early detection, diagnosis and treatment of prostate cancer.

Prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths of men in the U.S., placing a significant health burden on society. The overarching goal of the UCSF Prostate Cancer SPORE is to reduce the suffering and mortality associated with prostate cancer by leveraging a deep understanding of the disease to translate biological findings into clinical impact.

The prostate cancer SPORE will be co-led by Eric J. Small, MD, FASCO, a medical oncologist who is a UCSF professor of medicine and urology, co-leader of the UCSF Prostate Cancer Program and deputy director and chief scientific officer of the UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center (HDFCCC), and Felix Feng, MD, a radiation oncologist who is a professor of radiation oncology, urology and medicine at UCSF and co-leader of the UCSF Prostate Cancer Program.

"By bringing together a diverse and multi-disciplinary group of investigators, this prostate cancer SPORE will accelerate highly impactful translational research with the potential to significantly improve clinical outcomes for men with aggressive prostate cancer," said Small.

The UCSF Prostate Cancer SPORE will be organized into three scientific projects, each investigating aggressive prostate cancer from a mechanistic, biomarker and therapeutic perspective:

- Combination immunotherapy with radioligand therapy for metastatic prostate cancer
- Investigating clinical and biological implications of a novel hypermethylated subtype of mCRPC.

- Deciphering the role of the translational oncogenic program in prostate cancer

These projects are supported by required elements of all SPORE grants: an administrative core, a biostatistics and bioinformatics core and a pathology tissue core. In addition, a strong commitment to mentorship and developing new projects within the SPORE will be supported by a career enhancement program and a developing research program. The work of the SPORE will be enhanced by ongoing collaborations with other prostate cancer SPORES, NCI initiatives, molecular diagnostics and therapeutics companies, as well as with the National Clinical Trials Network (NCTN) and the DOD Prostate Cancer Clinical Trials Consortium (PCCTC).

“The infrastructure for our SPORE grant is designed to encourage and promote translation of innovative, impactful ideas and provide access to critical resources for bench-to-bedside transitions,” said Feng. “We also aim to sponsor interdisciplinary collaborations and provide an effective framework for mentoring and nurturing the next generation of translational scientists.”

The NCI established the Specialized Programs of Research Excellence (SPORE) in 1992 to promote interdisciplinary, translational research focused on cancers of specific organs or on groups of highly related cancers. To be awarded an NCI SPORE grant, investigators must have a track record of peer-reviewed research studies that include moving translational studies to human clinical trials to promote interdisciplinary, translational research focused on cancers of specific organs or on groups of highly related cancers. To be awarded an NCI SPORE grant, investigators must have a track record of peer-reviewed research studies that include moving translational studies to human clinical trials.

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