Gaining Momentum

2017 has already brought great things for Sarcoma Strong. Our goal setting, perseverance, strong network of support and generous sponsors, who believe in our mission, has culminated in the formation of our Inaugural Sarcoma Strong/MSTS Research Grant. The world’s most passionate and dedicated sarcoma researchers saw this new grant application appear in February and the deadline for application is May/June of this year. As a member of the Research Committee of the MSTS, I will be charged, along with the rest of the committee members and special guest grant selection members to review the applications and choose the individual, team and institution who can have the most impactful research for our sarcoma community. The ideal applicant is well established in the field of sarcoma translational research and needs to be able to show how funding this project with the $100,000 over a 2-year period will lead to subsequent application for NIH funding at the next level (Greater than $1 million).

We are proud of the work already done, but feel that this is just the beginning of our efforts. The organization will be getting a face lift this year and transition from the Team Sarcoma logo to a Sarcoma Strong logo.

The mission is the same: Increase Awareness, Advocate for our sarcoma warriors and families, and Raise funds for sarcoma research. With the updated logo will come an improved social media presence, organization of a board for Sarcoma Strong, and to move more to year round efforts with the 5k run being the pinnacle of our efforts but not the only fundraiser. The Blaze Pizza fundraisers have been an easy way to stay connected throughout the year and these types of fundraisers will happen on a regular basis. We are considering a merchandising option to generate revenue for research and increase awareness through these clothing items. Stay tuned…

TOGETHER WE CAN STAND UP TO SARCOMA!
Research corner: microRNA and Sarcoma

In the past three decades, genetic exploration has greatly improved the diagnosis for bone and soft tissue sarcomas, including the identification of fusion genes in sarcomas such as Ewing’s sarcoma, synovial sarcoma, myxoid liposarcoma, and clear cell sarcoma. The identification of miRNAs specific to histological subtypes may be a novel breakthrough for sarcoma research. A variety of miRNAs have been detected by various approaches. These miRNAs include those related to chromosomal translocation of each subtype or those associated with the cell differentiation of the normal counterpart. An important step forward has been achieved on the basis of miRNA research for further understanding of sarcomagenesis and sarcoma development.

To date, there are few useful biomarkers to monitor tumor development, which is one of the important problems in sarcomas. However, several researchers have shown the possibility of miRNAs as novel biomarkers for monitoring sarcomas or for their differential diagnosis using patient-derived serum or plasma. Since these trials of “liquid biopsy” have been limited to a few histological subtypes, further exploration to include a variety of subtypes is expected. These miRNAs would help clinicians to determine the optimal individual treatment options, thus leading to the improvement of the patients’ prognosis.

Emerging reports indicate the possibility of “miRNA therapeutics” in bone sarcomas. For example, supplementary administration of miR-143 mimic or miR-133a inhibitor into osteosarcoma-bearing mice using conventional chemotherapy has been shown to inhibit osteosarcoma lung metastasis. Further research is needed before this can be brought to patient trials.

microRNA research wins Best Tumor Paper and Poster Presentation at the 2017 American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) annual meeting in San Diego this March.

The paper titled Diagnostic and Prognostic Significance of Circulating Cell-free MicroRNAs as a Novel Biomarker for Osteosarcoma by Tomohiro Fujiwara et al., from Japan showed the possibility of having a blood test to monitor treatment and to detect recurrent disease.

The poster titled Validation of a Rat Model for Analysing microRNA in Chondrosarcoma by Christopher Dobson et al., was performed to evaluate the similarities and differences between rat and human chondrosarcoma in an effort to evaluate the possibility of using a rat model to study this type of cancer.

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GOALS:
Serve as a unifying force for those dealing with sarcoma
Contribute regular blog posts to disseminate knowledge, inspiration, hope and support
Seek feedback on blog content and continue to perfect the site until it best serves the Sarcoma Strong community

“Be fearless in the pursuit of what sets your soul on fire.”