

# **Molecular and Cellular Biology of Cancer Course 2007**

Monday 19<sup>th</sup>-Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February

Department of Pathology

Division of Cancer Studies

University of Birmingham, UK

## **Overview**

This was a five day lecture-based course covering a wide range of topics under the umbrella of the molecular biology of cancer. The course was intensive comprising of 31 lectures, 4 Clinical Pathological Conferences and 1 mini-symposium.

## **The Lectures**

The topics were grouped with each day concentrating on a different theme. These were:

1 *Molecular mechanisms of cancer invasion and metastasis*

2 *Cell cycle, DNA damage, cellular survival and cancer*

3 *Viruses and cancer*

4 *Stem cells and cancer*

5 *Molecular end-points - application of molecular biology to clinical trials*

The range of information covered under each theme was comprehensive with little repetition. The topics appealed equally to both scientists and clinicians; not too much confusing molecular jargon for the clinician but not straying too far into the clinic for those in the laboratory.

Without exception, all of the lectures were of a very high standard, covering important and currently relevant topics in a clear and succinct manner. The lecturers came from several institutions with excellent credentials; the audience could therefore feel confident in the information that they were being given. The presentation skills and accompanying handouts were also very good, and adequate time was given for questions at the end of each session.

In addition to the lectures, several clinical pathological conferences were staged which were useful in hammering home the fact that the molecular basis of cancer will become ever more important in both the diagnosis and treatment of patients.

It was clear throughout, but particularly on the final day, that the work performed by the laboratory scientist does eventually translate through to the clinical environment. Success therefore depends on good working relationships between scientists and clinicians.

## **Facilities and Organisation**

The course was held at the Professional Development Centre within the School of Medicine. The facilities were excellent with a well-equipped, reasonably sized lecture theatre, internet access and good catering and toileting facilities. Numerous biotechnology stands were also present. The organisation was of a high standard with handouts available for all of the lectures. Registration forms and certificates of attendance were easily accessible. Members of the course organisation team were always readily at hand to deal with any issues that arose.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I found this course most enjoyable and informative, It was highly relevant to both my research and to my clinical practice. I would certainly recommend it to other scientists or clinicians who are interested in learning more about the molecular biology behind cancer.

***I would like to take this opportunity to thank Prostate Matters International for their kind sponsorship. Without your help, I would have been unable to attend this very useful course.***

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