HSCI RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES
SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES

RADIATION THERAPY AND ITS EMERGING ROLE IN ENHANCING THE BODY’S IMMUNE RESPONSE TO CANCER

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Abstract:

The traditional role of radiation therapy is to treat cancer present at a few sites in the body by delivering an ablative total dose targeted to those sites in a treatment course comprised of many daily fractions. Over the last 15 years enormous progress has been made in the understanding of the human immune response. Consequently there are immunotherapy drugs and other agents now in clinical trials to aid patients’ utilize their own immune system to fight their cancers whether oligometastatic or widespread. For approximately 50% of patients on immunotherapy drugs their disease continues to progress. Adjuvant use of radiation has been found in some cases to potentiate immune system anti-tumor activity. We examine the use of radiation’s possible mechanisms of action in this adjuvant role so as to eventually enhance and optimize its use in systemic ablative cancer therapy.

Host: Dr. Keith Stantz