Canadian Cancer Trials Group | Groupe canadien des essais sur le cancer

CCTG PATIENT REPRESENTATIVE
PRIORITIES IN CANCER RESEARCH

CCTG Patient Representatives participated in a facilitated session to identify the research topics that they view as being most important to cancer patients and caregivers. The top six identified priorities, in order of importance, are intended to help guide the development of the CCTG trial portfolio based on the views of those with lived experience.

OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

The principles should be regarded as paramount when considering the Priorities in Cancer Research identified by the CCTG Patient Representatives:

All clinical trials should ensure outcomes are focused on having a direct positive impact on patients and include robust quality of life patient surveys and reporting.

Every effort should be made to include patients from historically underrepresented groups. Clinical trial designs should specifically outline how researchers intend to recruit from these groups, including success criteria and reporting requirements around diversity goals and metrics.

It is critically important that access to clinical trials be expanded and that the time from ideation to operationalization of clinical trials be significantly shortened so that patients can have more ready access to potentially life-saving or life-improving treatments.

Patient Representative CANCER RESEARCH PRIORITIES

The Cancer Research Priorities are disease site agnostic and are intended to encompass all cancers, including those considered "rare".

1. Innovative treatments

Focus on innovative therapies, to find treatments to completely cure cancers by killing both growth and stem cells while sparing normal cells. Some novel treatments available in other countries are not available yet in Canada, prioritize these as study options.

- Antibodies, nanoparticles or oncolytic viruses in targeted therapies.
- Treatments using oncogenomic analysis.
- CRISPR in vitro gene editing.
- CAR T-cell, TIL, mRNA, and therapeutic vaccine therapies (dendritic cell).
- Other leading edge research areas.

2. Biomarkers

Biomarkers and ctDNA investigation is a vital path towards defeating cancer. Encourage cancer research and treatment options based on biomarkers rather than location of occurrence, where one or more biomarkers are common to several sites.

- Identification of an individual's predisposition to cancer.
- Preventative vaccines and early detection.
- Personalized treatments, like therapeutic vaccines.
- Surveillance for progression and recurrence during and post treatment.

3. Use of Technology

Exploration of how artificial intelligence (AI) can be used to enhance the identification of research opportunities, as well as the analysis of clinical trial results.

- Clinical data that could be used to better patient outcomes or identify patterns for further research.
- Conduct trials with AI objectives (i.e. AI study to see if is can improve treatment decisions, progression or recurrence predictions).
- Support efforts underway to digitize patient samples and results to optimize their utility.

4. Psychological Holistic Oncology

A patient's mental state and physical well-being can impact their ability to cope with a cancer diagnosis, adhere to treatments, and improve outcomes. Holistic cancer treatments can equip patients to develop wellness habits that enhance long-term quality of life.

- Examine if the use of holistic approaches, including exercise, nutrition, appearance, and mental well-being can augment healing and overall wellness.
- Explore existing web-based tools that have been developed for these purposes.

5. Early Detection

Research in minimally invasive, cost-effective screening tools to detect cancer early in all populations including individuals under age 40. With the goal of quick transitions to active treatment.

- Includes bio-marker based screening.
- Other less-invasive screening methods.
- Enhanced stool based tests for colorectal cancer.
- Detection through blood, saliva or breath.
- Enhanced imaging, such as low-dose CT scanning.

6. Treatment Optimization

Trials that aim to optimize treatment dosages and time periods, with the goals of minimizing side effects, patient burden, improving long-term quality of life, while maintaining effective tumour control.

- New, innovative agents that directly target cancer cells while sparing healthy cells.
- Improve long-term quality of life, replacing damaging treatments with less invasive treatments.
- De-escalation and dose optimization.