

Melanoma

Research Alliance

AACR Special Conference Showcases Developments in Melanoma 30 MRA-Affiliated Investigators Featured

The American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) held a Special Conference, “Advances in Melanoma: From Biology to Therapy” on September 20-23 in Philadelphia, PA. The meeting highlighted MRA-funded research and results from its cutting-edge programs. Leading scientists and clinicians from around the world, including 30 MRA-supported researchers (approximately three-fourths of all speakers) presented findings that underscore the continued progress in melanoma research. Suzanne Topalian, M.D., Board Member and Chair of the MRA Scientific Advisory Panel, was one of three conference co-chairpersons of the meeting along with MRA funded researchers Keith Flaherty, M.D. and Levi Garraway, M.D., Ph.D.

A main theme of the program was ‘convergence’ – the coming together of knowledge from multiple perspectives to seed the next wave of discoveries in the fight against melanoma. MRA investigators and others presented on a variety of topics, including melanoma biology; biomarkers; response and resistance to treatment; immunity and the tumor microenvironment; and, novel combination therapies. All in all, the research findings presented at this meeting continue to add to MRA’s excitement about new approaches for preventing and treating melanoma.

Another highlight of this meeting was a unique joint session of melanoma experts with those attending a separate AACR Hematological Oncology meeting in Philadelphia. This joint session, “Clinical Science Intersections between Melanoma and Hematologic Malignancies,” sponsored by AACR, MRA and the Lymphoma Research Foundation was the first time researchers from two different meetings and disciplines were convened on such a scale at an AACR meeting. This was timely, however, given that both hematologic malignancies and melanoma have experienced an explosion of treatments based on genomics, targeted agents and immunotherapies. The meeting featured presentations from scientists who discussed overlapping themes in the areas of targeted therapy and immunotherapy. The joint session provided an opportunity for researchers from both disciplines to share lessons and form new collaborations to speed progress for cancer patients.

About the Melanoma Research Alliance

MRA is a public charity formed in 2007 under the auspices of the Milken Institute, with the generous founding support of Debra and Leon Black. MRA has dedicated more than \$60 million to research seeking to better prevent, diagnose, and treat melanoma, the most deadly type of skin cancer. Due to the ongoing support of its founders, 100% of every dollar MRA raises goes to support its melanoma research program. The organization is poised to build on recent momentum in the field, accelerating the pace of scientific discovery and translation in order to eliminate suffering and death due to melanoma. MRA’s ability to fund wide-ranging research in melanoma is amplified by unique multi-faceted collaborations and partnerships with individuals, private foundations, and corporations. For more information, please visit www.CureMelanoma.org.