



# Biology of Blood and Marrow Transplantation

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ASBMT Notes

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### ASBMT Announces its New Name: ASTCT

The American Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation (ASBMT), a professional society dedicated to advancing the science and clinical care for patients who require blood and marrow transplants, today announced it has changed its name to the American Society for Transplantation and Cellular Therapy (ASTCT) in recognition of the rapid shift toward cellular therapies in this field of medicine. The ASTCT name will better reflect the organization's commitment to serving as the professional home and community for healthcare providers, researchers, and other professionals who are dedicated to cures involving blood and marrow transplantation and cellular therapies.

The new name was announced at the annual Transplantation and Cellular Therapy Meetings, which the organization is hosting with the Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research (CIBMTR) from Feb. 20 to 24 in Houston, Texas. The ASTCT name was chosen to acknowledge the rapid shift toward cellular therapies, and to reflect the organization's 25 years of leadership in that field, along with transplantation.

"Our focus on cellular therapy and transplantation is certainly not new – and we felt our name needed to better reflect our focus and expertise in both fields," explained Dr. Navneet Majhail, Director of the Blood and Marrow Transplant Program at the Cleveland Clinic and newly appointed ASTCT President. "There is an increasing emphasis on new cell therapies, and it is important that we educate and engage those in the field who have not worked in the transplantation arena, but are focused on cell therapies. We needed to communicate our expertise in cell therapies in order to best collaborate on research and improve the quality of care for patients undergoing these treatments. Of course, we are also excited to continue

important work with our core constituency in the field of transplantation as well."

The name change comes at a time when the ASTCT is providing critical leadership in cell therapy. The organization coordinated a consensus conference last month, and released a paper on chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T cell therapy that proposes a new consensus grading scale for toxicities to be applied across clinical trials, academic research and commercial product development. (CAR) T cell therapy is considered one of the most promising new treatments for patients battling relapsed and refractory leukemia, lymphoma and other forms of cancer.

"Our organization has done great work under the ASBMT name, and our research and advancements in transplantation and cell therapy will continue to grow moving forward as ASTCT," noted outgoing ASTCT President, Dr. John DiPersio MD, PhD. "This name change, along with recent contributions we've made to the grading scale in (CAR) T cell therapy, demonstrate our desire to include and engage medical professionals and researchers from all fields of study that are relevant to our mission.

### ASSOCIATION NEWS AND UPDATES

#### Welcome Incoming President Dr. Navneet Majhail

At the TCT Meetings of ASBMT and CIBMTR, Dr. Navneet Majhail was named as the ASTCT, formerly ASBMT, president. Majhail is the director of the Cleveland Clinic's Blood and Marrow Transplant Program.

He is the first president under the society's new name, and he said he is excited to help transform the society's image, as well as be at the forefront of emerging science and technology.

"I consider myself to be very fortunate that I get to lead our society at such an exciting time," he said. "Our field is at an inflection point with an increasing

emphasis on non-transplant cell therapy, and as the 'original cellular therapists' we are already adapting as we care for patients receiving a plethora of innovative cell based products at our transplant programs."

To read his full message as president, visit [asbmt.org](http://asbmt.org).

#### Society Names New Director of Government Relations

ASTCT is excited to announce the appointment of a new Director of Government Relations, Alycia Maloney.

Before joining the society, Maloney served as the Health Policy Advisor and Legislative Counsel to Congressman Kevin Brady (R-TX). There she managed a legislative portfolio including health care, social security, human resources and appropriations. Before working in the House of Representatives, Maloney worked as a Research Associate with the Celgene Corporation, focusing in federal government relations. Maloney said she cannot wait to start working on behalf of the society's members and the patients they care for.

"It is an honor to have the opportunity to work with such an incredible community of like-minded individuals," Maloney said. "I have personally seen and experienced the lifesaving impact of stem cell transplants and I fully believe in the mission of ASBMT to advance research and education in this space. During my time on the Hill, I enjoyed working on health care policies that had a real and lasting impact on patients and their families. I'm looking forward to continuing this type of meaningful work at ASBMT."

#### ASTCT Forms Three New SIGs

ASTCT has recently formed three new SIGs: The Social Work SIG, the Women and Underrepresented Minorities SIG, and the Biobehavioral Research SIG.

The Social Work SIG formed in order to further integrate social work into the multidisciplinary HCT team and provide an avenue for collaboration and the advancement of psychosocial health research. Our hope is to create an environment that will assist transplant/cell therapy social workers to grow their professional skills within our social

work organization and our interdisciplinary collaborations within ASTCT to further the clinical use and position of social work with this very unique patient population.

Meanwhile, the overarching mandate of the Women and URM SIG will be to increase the number of women and other underrepresented minorities in

the field of stem cell transplantation and cellular therapy/immunotherapy.

Finally, keep a lookout for more information on the Biobehavioral Research SIG in the weeks to come!

For more information about these SIGs, contact Anna Hawkshead at [ahawkshead@asbmt.org](mailto:ahawkshead@asbmt.org).