



Biology of Blood and Marrow Transplantation



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ASTCT Notes

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Amazing Education and Fellowship: A Perspective from the Clinical Research Training Course

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As I was flying over the Rocky Mountains on my late afternoon Delta flight, enjoying the views of the snow-covered peaks and skiing trails below, I did not know that the next few days were going to be one of the most transformative experiences of my transplant career so far. I had been to a few clinical research courses in the past and they all were great and educational in their own unique ways. But none of the ones that I had attended previously had been in particular career a defining one.

As I landed in Salt Lake City Airport and was waiting for some of my course mates to arrive, I started looking over my clinical trial proposal that I had submitted for ASTCT's Clinical Research Training Course (CRTC) a few months back. I had worked on this proposal already for so many months, and I wondered what I could learn and change about it in five days that I had not already thought at length about. I was clearly wrong!

Our first day started with introductions and all the scholars presented their respective proposals. There was a wide array of themes from CAR T cell trials to fecal microbiota transplantation to novel conditioning regimens and even a supportive care trial using a "digital life coach."

More importantly, it was very evident that everyone in the room from trainee scholars to faculty were not only invested in learning new ideas but were all so passionate about our field of transplantation and cellular therapy. Despite all of us being from different centers and backgrounds and never having had met each other before, the camaraderie and fellowship among all the attendees was palpable.

Over the next few days, we discussed high yield transplant concepts and continued to work on our proposals in small groups of scholars and faculty. The discussion of transplant concepts, even though it was PowerPoint lecture based in format, was the farthest it could have been from didactic teaching. The talks were a riveting mix of personal anecdotes and pearls of wisdom from years of experience.

I happened to naively ask one of the faculty members when they joined their current institution – it so happened that it was same year I was born in. And I said to myself, "If you have the opportunity to listen to someone having your lifetime worth of experience in managing GVHD, you sit there attentively and learn."

Even though I was confident that I had thought of everything that could possibly have related to my proposal, I was pleasantly surprised that everyone had so many useful suggestions to make it even better. Not just the faculty, but all the scholars contributed to each other's proposals and by the end of the course – everyone's proposal was significantly better than where we all had started.

In between the talks and protocol development and Japanese poetry (Haiku), were sessions where the scholars asked faculty questions about life and careers. Some thoughts that struck a chord with me that were repeated by many faculty members was that a career in transplant is not a "job" but a lifestyle. And while it is challenging and requires utmost dedication, it is one that also provides great satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment. It was surreal to hear from experts who shared their failures and success stories, and things that they wish they had done differently.

That part of the course was undoubtedly the best education that I could not have imagined I would have at CRTC.

I would be remiss if I didn't share the non-academic activities that we enjoyed at Park City. It's a beautiful resort town conveniently situated in the Wasatch Back region in the Rocky Mountains and is home to the largest skiable area in the US (site of the 2002 Winter Olympics).

In the summer, it boasts of several hiking trails, which were the site of our 6:45a.m. CRTC morning walk club this year. One of the evenings, we scholars ventured out to the city to dine at The Farm, which was named one of "Utah's 25 Best Restaurants" in 2015. There I learned first-hand that bone marrow is best administered parenterally, and enteral consumption is not quite as pleasant to the palate. The best part of the social program during CRTC is undoubtedly the visit to grand abode of Dr. Dan Couriel overlooking the mountains – it's a great recruitment tool for anyone that he wants to hire to his program at the Huntsman Cancer Institute.

CRTC was clearly a highlight of my training and career in transplant. Meeting all these faculty who are giants in transplantation and cellular therapy and whom I had only heard or seen during the TCT Meetings of ASTCT and CIBMTR before had me and everyone else completely in awe.

And after meeting all my course mates, each one of whom deserves the H. Jean Khoury Award for Scholarly Excellence, I have great hope and expectations from the next generation of transplanters. CRTC has been a pleasure to attend a treasure trove of learning experiences, and the future only looks brighter than ever. The only question that still remains though is, "Who is Ted Gooley?"

Interested in applying for 2020's Clinical Research Training Course? Visit astct.org for more information.

WHAT'S NEW AT ASTCT

ASTCT Announces Prestigious Fellow Designation

Appointment as a Fellow in a professional society is designed to honor exceptional achievement and service within the ASTCT member community. This distinction recognizes ASTCT members for their volunteer service, dedication, and commitment to ASTCT. Recipients have carried out efforts that benefit ASTCT, the specialty of transplantation and cellular therapy, and the patients whom they serve. Meeting the minimal requirements for advancement to ASTCT Fellow status does not guarantee advancement to an ASTCT Fellow. The peer-reviewed phase of the application, along with the achievement of the minimum requirements, will ultimately determine if advancement to Fellow status is warranted.

Learn more at astct.org

Submit a Nomination for NP/PA SIG Lifetime Achievement Award

The NP/PA SIG is seeking nominations for one individual to receive the ASTCT NP/PA Lifetime Achievement Award, which will be presented at the TCT Meetings on February 21, 2020 in Orlando.

Please help recognize a colleague for their outstanding work and dedication

to NP/PA practice in hematopoietic cell transplantation (HCT) by nominating them for this prestigious award. Both NPs and PAs qualify, but must be ASTCT NP/PA SIG members. Please send your nominations to Anna Hawkshead (ahawkshead@astct.org) at the ASTCT Headquarters. The deadline for nominations is **December 1, 2019 at 11:59 p.m.**

This award will be presented to an ASTCT NP/PA SIG member who has made significant contributions to the field of HCT through consistent, high-quality contributions as it applies to NP/PA practices. These contributions include publications, presentations, mentorship, and leadership that have impacted the specialty.

The recipient of this award will receive a recognition plaque to be presented at the conference as well as a waiver of the TCT Meetings registration fee.

Eligibility:

- Nominees have been in practice for at least 10 years in HCT.
- Nominees must be a NP or PA and be current members of the ASTCT NP/PA SIG.
- Nominees cannot be current members of the NP/PA Awards Selection Committee.

Application Requirements:

- A nomination letter (self nominations will be accepted)
- Updated curriculum vitae

Register for the 2020 TCT Meetings of ASTCT and CIBMTR Today!

The TCT | Transplantation and Cellular Therapy Meetings are a joint partnership between ASTCT and CIBMTR that connects various medical professionals. Investigators, clinicians, pharmacists, administrators, and more collaborate and discuss to strive for improved care of BMT and cellular therapy patients across the country and around the world.

The 2020 TCT Meetings will take place February 19-23, 2020 at the World Center Marriott in Orlando, Florida. Don't forget to enter your membership number to register at a discounted rate. This is found when you log on to the ASTCT site, click the profile icon in the top right corner, and select "Profile." On your profile page, click the "View Membership Details" button in the column on the left. Your ID number is listed directly under your name.

To register, please visit astct.org