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## Report from Career Development Workshop for Fellows and Junior Faculty: How to Choose a Career in Oncology That Is Right for You - ASCO 2005

**KEYWORDS:** Career Choice; Medical Oncology; Education

This report highlights topics of presentations held during Career Development Workshop for Fellows and Junior Faculty: How to Choose a Career in Oncology That Is Right for You. This Workshop has been held in conjunction with 2005 Annual Meeting of American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) - Orlando, Florida, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2005 and was designed for trainees, junior faculty and beginning practitioners in all subspecialties in oncology. Distinguished faculty members and facilitators discussed opportunities in various careers in oncology, outlined the skills needed for writing and obtaining grants and identified careers in oncology in the international area.

First part of the Workshop consisted three presentations:

1) Career Opportunities in Academics held with aim that trainees and junior faculty:

- Understand that there are a variety of career pathways that can lead to success in academics

- Evaluate a job offers in academics

- Know the general components of a successful career path in academics

2) Career Opportunities in Industry held with aim that trainees and junior faculty:

- Appreciate the critical need for clinical oncologists in industry

- Become acquainted with the job functions of an oncologist working in industry

- Know what issues should be considered in contemplating a drug development career

- Be aware of the qualifications sought by industry employers

- Understand the potential career paths associated with pursuing a role in drug development

- Have a sense of the compensation, perquisites, and training associated with a career in industry

- Obtain recommendations and resources on how to find a position

3) Career Opportunities in Private Practice held with aim that trainees and junior faculty:

- Choose the practice that energizes

- Understand the advantages and disadvantages of private practice

- Know the characteristics of a successful private practice

During roundtable discussion, there were three discussants for each of the next topics:

- 1) Academic Careers in Clinical Research

- 2) Academic Careers Basic/Translational Research

- 3) Career Opportunities in Industry

- 4) Clinical Research in Private Practice

- 5) How to Choose a Private Practice that is Right for You

- 6) Grant Writing for Senior Fellows

- 7) Grant Writing: Getting Started... A Primer for Fellows

- 8) International Careers in Oncology

Because our oncological community represents an international setting in relation with ASCO, a presentation "How to make an international career?" will be described in this article with more details. Trainees and junior faculty were advised that environment and support are crucial in regard of identifying a mentor, institutional infrastructure, protected time and clear and realistic definition of success in oncology. It is important for fellows to publish consistently with focus on first author papers that help to establish their identity (at least 1/3) and also as collaborator (up to 2/3). They have been advised to improve their English, to collaborate internationally and participate in international meetings and organizations. About thesis that fellow should spend 2 years abroad, participants discussed about next questions: Do they want an international career or just a job abroad? Will they move abroad for the short or the long term? If so, how will they maintain contacts in home country? Are they targeting English-speaking countries only? Are their qualifications valid in the country they want to move to? What salary and benefits do they require? Working abroad, they could enhance skills by practicing medicine within a different medical system or they choose such position because altruism or they want new opportunities for personal and career development (learn a new language, broaden personal network of contacts, develop awareness of different cultures, see the world and earn money while doing it.).

Non-career issues that they consider are:

- Family (Do they have family to take with them? What will they do about work/school? Is their family in home country happy about it?)

- Finance (Can they afford to go?)

- Relocation is stressful

- Be prepared for culture shock and homesickness.

For the question "When should they go", trainees have been advised to:

- Be sure to complete training in home country because national medical association may have rules about training or working abroad

- Consider whether their work abroad will be recognized at home - this may be important for postgraduate training and future career

- Having an advanced degree may make it easier to find positions but the more experienced you are, the easier it is to find positions and the more difficult it is to go.

Where can trainees go?

- Europe: if they are citizens of European Union (EU) and qualified in its member state they are entitled to full registration in any EU country

- Developed world: the most common destinations are USA, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada

- Developing world: medical positions are frequently available through aid agencies.

How do they organize it?

- National medical associations may have an international department that can help

- Talk to people who have made their own international careers to get the "real picture" and helpful hints

- Plan well in advance - it may take between six months and a year to organize.

Usually they move to institutions with possibilities for basic/translational

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The manuscript was received: 30.09.2005.

Accepted for publication: 15.10.2005.



research. A drug development career offers to trainees the opportunity to:

- Translate excellent science into clinical benefit
- Transform revenues from existing therapies into innovation
- Learn best practices in rigorous clinical trials conduct
- Broadly and strategically apply oncology clinical knowledge toward the greater good
- Make a positive difference in the lives of more patients than is possible during a lifetime of clinical practice.

Considerations in selecting a career in industry are:

- Personal requirements (family health, geographic or travel constraints)
- Primary interests (clinical trials versus patient care versus bench science)
- Comfort with teamwork (people person versus individualist)
- Strategic attitude (willingness to research, assess, and plan)
- Writing abilities and presentation skills (clinical plans, protocols, study reports, manuscripts, monographs)
- Internal and external fund raising and reporting
- Reconciled to commercial motivations (ability to support both clinical and commercial objectives).

Regarding finding a job, lists of "Things to Do" and "Things Not to Do" have been offered to trainees.

Things to Do:

- Let interest be known to program director or mentor
- Let company medical liaisons know that you are potentially interested
- Talk to people who have made the transition to industry
- Look on company websites for career opportunities
- Contact the head of oncology at a company of interest
- Contact a reputable recruiter who can selectively market you.

Things Not to Do:

- Misrepresent anything on curriculum vitae
- Post curriculum vitae on Medzilla, Hotjobs.com, etc
- Allow nonselective distribution of your curriculum vitae via recruiter.

At the end of presentation, a 2x2 rule of one famous oncologist was offered to auditorium:

- Fellow should spend 2 years abroad
- Two years with him producing 2 scientific manuscripts as first author
- Two full days per week in the clinic
- Three full days per week with research
- A good clinician needs to be a good researcher.

## SUGGESTED READING

1. Howard Hughes Medical Institute and Burroughs Wellcome Fund (US). Making the Right Moves A Practical Guide to Scientific Management for Postdocs and New Faculty. North Carolina: The Institute; 2004.