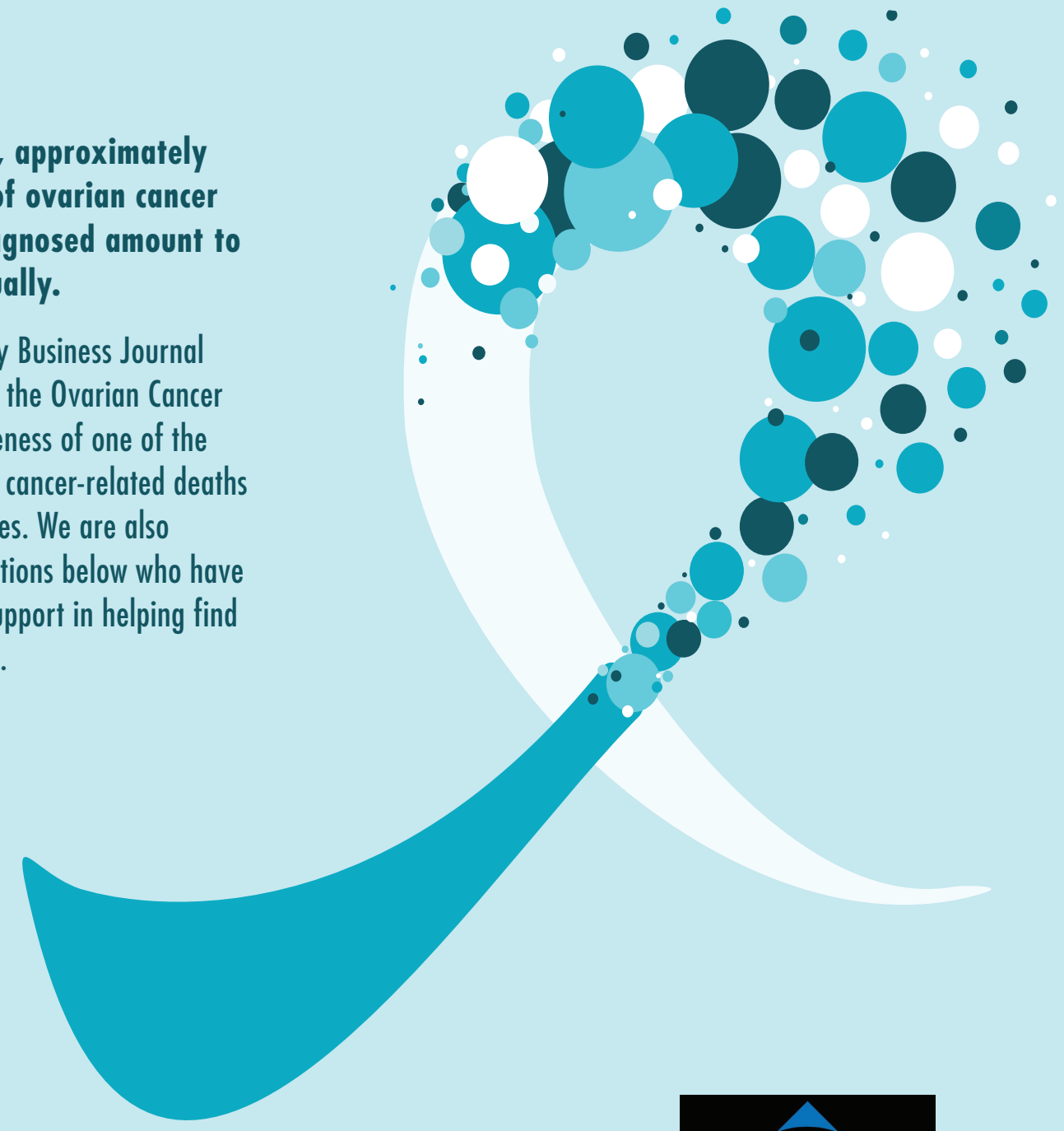
Ovarian Cancer Awareness

In the United States, approximately 15,000 women die of ovarian cancer each year. Those diagnosed amount to 21,000 women annually.

The San Fernando Valley Business Journal is proud to partner with the Ovarian Cancer Circle to heighten awareness of one of the most common causes of cancer-related deaths among women of all ages. We are also grateful to the organizations below who have shown their generous support in helping find the cure for this disease.



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A Profile Of Courage & Hope

A mother's heartbreaking story leads to a beacon of hope

A child's death is an anguish. "But, how to move forward becomes the unimaginable next challenge," explained Paulinda Schimmel Babbini, whose daughter, Robin, died from ovarian cancer when she was only 20.

Robin was a beautiful bundle of high school energy and activities. Early in her senior year she struggled with painful symptoms that defied diagnosis until a CT revealed Stage 3 ovarian cancer. Robin endured multiple surgeries and grueling chemo and yet managed to begin her freshman year at UC Santa Barbara; she even pledged Kappa Kappa Gamma. But six months later, her cancer recurred and had metastasized. Robin lost the battle June 29, 2006.

"Why me?" Robin quietly wondered. "Maybe this is happening for a reason."

Initially Paulinda had no answers. She, her son and their family mourned. But grief and loss slowly gave way to a driving need to be of service. Once a very successful businesswoman who had owned and operated a thriving digital imaging business for over 40 years, Paulinda made the inspiring transition into a life of activist, as an advocate for women battling ovarian cancer.

Paulinda founded the nonprofit 501c3 **The Ovarian Cancer Circle/Inspired by Robin Babbini** to heighten awareness among women of all ages about this insidious stealth cancer. As a shining light on the life of young Robin, The Circle has grown over the past eight years, bolstered by the tireless support of the Board of Directors and team of volunteers, into a vibrant organization, an important resource for news, community outreach and donor support for ovarian cancer medical research.

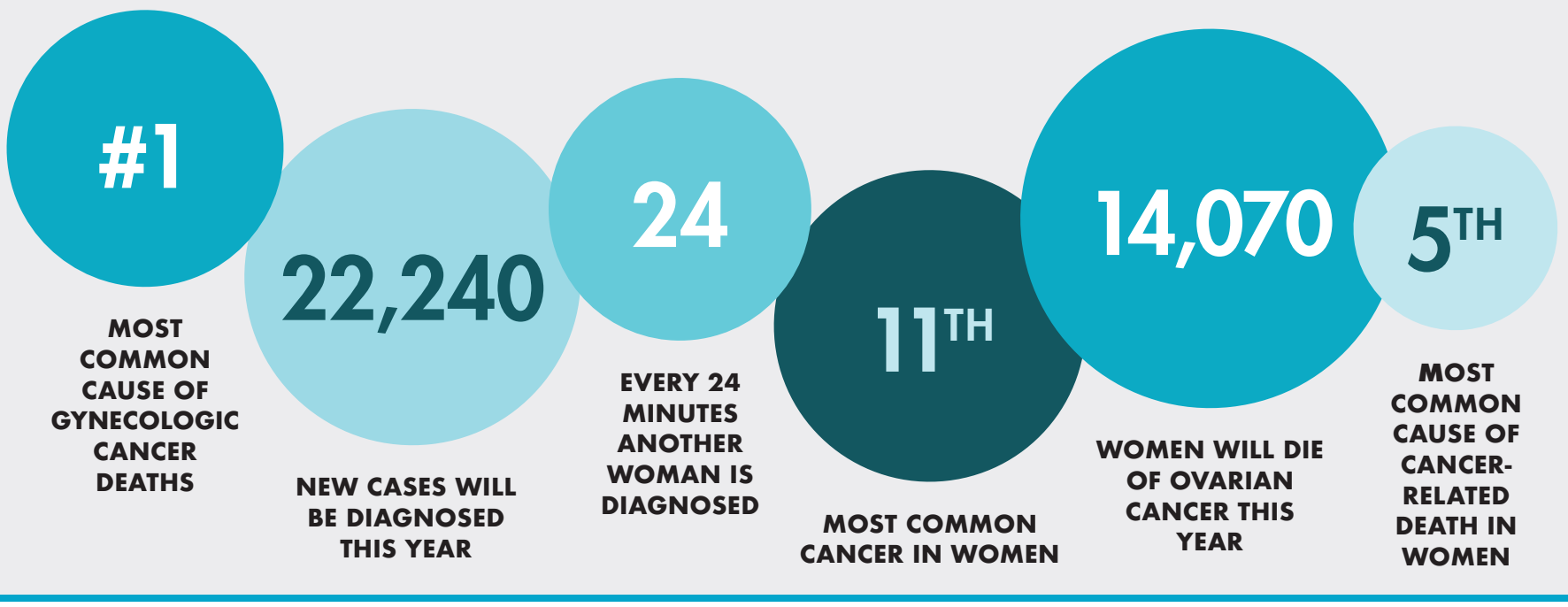
Paulinda Babbini devotes her life to heightening the awareness of ovarian cancer. It's a path she never could have anticipated but it is now a cherished mission that sustains a loving flame for her daughter, Robin.

The group's website offers updates on research, treatments, regional and national seminars, as well as fundraising events.

The Circle has increased its public profile with ever-widening local TV and radio press coverage. Paulinda's tireless work has been honored with a "Women in Leadership Award" by West Hollywood; KNX Radio "Hero of the Week;" a "Certificate of Recognition" by the City of Los Angeles; and a KTLA-TV special segment.

Moreover, last year, a 'first-ever' accolade was awarded by the City of Los Angeles, initiated by Councilmembers Paul Koretz, Monica Rodrigue and Nury Martinez, which included a City Proclamation honoring the extraordinary work of The Circle and declaring Sept. 19, 2017 as Ovarian Cancer Awareness Day.

OVARIAN CANCER BY THE NUMBERS



OVARIAN CANCER AWARENESS

SEPTEMBER IS OVARIAN CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

On September 25th through the end of the month, thanks to the generous efforts of Los Angeles Councilman Paul Koretz, Los Angeles City Hall will for the very first time be lit in the color teal – the national identity brand of ovarian cancer.

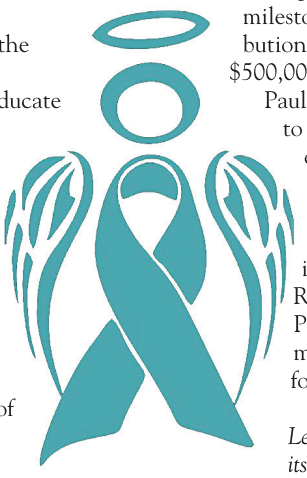
Civic recognition expands still further when the City of West Hollywood initiates for the first time its recognition of September Ovarian Cancer Awareness and the lighting of its City Hall building in the color teal.

These recognitions are vital to educate the community about this deadly disease. Each year over 22,500 women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Some 70% of these women will suffer recurrence of the cancer. There is NO early detection / diagnostic screening test for ovarian cancer (as opposed to a pap test or mammogram). Consequently, The Circle teaches to be alert for the very elusive symptoms of this cancer: unusual fatigue; feeling full but eating less; urinary frequency; nausea; abdominal pressure or bloating.

Fundraising is the key to research and clinical trials that will lead to early diagnosis, more effective treatments and ultimately a cure.

Each year The Circle hosts two major fundraising events: *'Take a Bite Out of Ovarian Cancer"* is November 15, 2018, sponsored by Ruth's Chris Steak House in Woodland Hills. Guest of honor this year is Dr. Sanaz Memarzadeh, The Circle's affiliate gynecologic oncologist. For tickets, sponsorship and program ads, see www.theovariancancercircle.org/events. Also, in the spring, *"Teal There's a Cure"* is an evening's dinner, auction plus marquee musical and comedy entertainment. Details will be soon be posted on The Circle's website.

The Circle dedicates all its fundraising to the prestigious UCLA-based G.O. Discovery Lab, led by Dr. Memarzadeh. In 2018, The Circle proudly achieved a major milestone, reaching a total contribution to the G.O. Discovery Lab of $500,000.

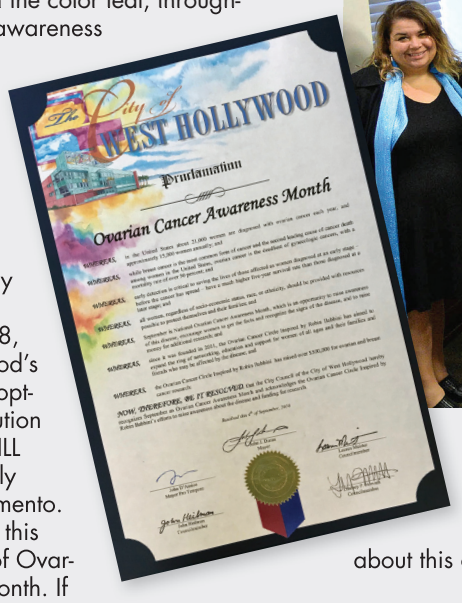


Paulinda Babbini devotes her life to heightening the awareness of ovarian cancer. It's a path she never could have anticipated but it is now a cherished mission that sustains a loving flame for her daughter, Robin. It is in her memory that Paulinda remains passionately motivated until there is a cure for ovarian cancer.

Learn more about The Circle and its fight against Ovarian Cancer by visiting theovariancancercircle.org.

LOS ANGELES CITY HALL RECOGNIZES SEPTEMBER AS OVARIAN CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

The City of Los Angeles and its Councilman, Paul Koretz and the City of West Hollywood, and it's Mayor, John D. Duran, along with all respective Council Members, will initiate a special event, one that is truly significant and a "first" for each City Hall. Each will light up their City Hall buildings in the color teal, throughout September, to create awareness about Ovarian Cancer. September is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month and this symbolic gesture is a significant acknowledgement to raising awareness about the serious and grim statistics associated with this deadly cancer.



On September 4, 2018, The City of West Hollywood's City Council members adopted and approved a resolution supporting THE BRACA BILL AB2342, which is currently being circulated in Sacramento. The City Council adopted this resolution in recognition of Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. If this bill passes, then women will be able to get the proper, necessary screenings, should they find any problematic susceptibility, regarding their breast and/or ovarian health. This bill comes from the office of Assemblywoman Autumn Burke and Assemblywoman Marie Waldron in Sacramento.

In addition, on Sept. 4th, a magnificent proclamation was given to Paulinda Babbini, Founder and President of The Ovarian Cancer Circle, Inspired by Robin Babbini, and part of it reads: "Now, therefore, be it resolved that the City Council of the City of West Hollywood, hereby recognizes September as Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month and acknowledges the Ovarian Cancer Circle, Inspired by Robin Babbini's efforts to raise awareness about this disease and funding for research."

RECOGNITION OF AN IMPORTANT CAUSE

It all started on September 19, 2017 when Councilmembers Paul Koretz (CD5), Nury Martinez (CD6) and Monica Rodriguez (CD7) made a conscious decision together to raise awareness about Ovarian Cancer. On that day, the Los Angeles City Council recognized the grassroots non-profit organization, The Ovarian Cancer Circle.

Teal is the national color of Ovarian Cancer Awareness and September is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. The response was astounding and moving. Emotional stories were shared of the terrible loss of so many family and friends who had succumbed to this deadly cancer.

So moved was Councilmember Koretz by the presentation and by the reaction of so many, that he wanted to do something memorable this year. On Tuesday, September 25, 2018, almost exactly one year to the date after the initial presentation, there is a plan to revitalize that momentum. Councilmember Koretz has cleared the way to light the exterior of City Hall the color teal until October 1st. There will be accompanying outreach to spread the word and wear teal on that day. The hope is that by having City Hall lit in teal, this will create a conversation about ovarian cancer awareness. It is The Circle's intention to educate the public about the disease, highlighting the often missed, silent symptoms and the importance of being your own health care advocate.

OVARIAN CANCER AWARENESS

Spotlight on the Cedars-Sinai Expert Radiology Team

Cedars-Sinai has assembled an outstanding radiology team with remarkable accomplishments and experience in the fight against ovarian and other cancers. Below are snapshots of the team members.

HOWARD SANDLER, MD, MS
PROFESSOR AND CHAIR, RADIATION ONCOLOGY
RONALD H. BLOOM FAMILY CHAIR IN CANCER THERAPEUTICS

Dr. Sandler's clinical and research interests include prostate cancer and other genitourinary tumors, skin cancer and a broad range of subjects related to radiation oncology. He has been involved in many research projects funded by the National Institutes of Health and other agencies. He trained in radiation oncology at the University of Pennsylvania.

C. MICHELE BURNISON, MD
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, RADIATION ONCOLOGY

Dr. Burnison's clinical expertise is in cancers of the prostate, breast, thyroid, skin and in leukemia/lymphomas. She is particularly respected for her experience in prostate radiation implants and intensity modulated radiation therapy (IMRT and seed implants), as well as breast radiation therapy. She trained in radiation oncology at UCLA.

BEHROOZ HAKIMIAN, MD
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, RADIATION ONCOLOGY

Dr. Hakimian's clinical expertise is in brain tumors, pediatric cancers, lymphomas, gynecologic cancers and sarcomas. He is experienced with total body irradiation and brachytherapy. Dr. Hakimian is a dedicated teacher, and he directs the medical student experience within the Department of Radiation Oncology. He trained in radiation oncology at University of California, Irvine.

BENJAMIN L. KING, MD
RADIATION ONCOLOGIST

Dr. King is accomplished in treating a variety of cancers, particularly of the prostate. He previously served as a radiation oncologist at Boston's Brigham and Women's Hospital, and as clinical instructor at Harvard Medical School. Dr. King received his medical degree at Harvard University and completed his training in radiation oncology at the University of Washington Medical Center.

AMIN J. MIRHADI, MD
RADIATION ONCOLOGIST

Dr. Mirhadi's primary clinical and research interests include breast cancer, lung cancer, brain tumors, and spine and lung radiosurgery (image-guided). He trained in radiation oncology at UCLA.

ROBERT S. REZNIK, MD
RADIATION ONCOLOGIST
INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Reznik's primary clinical expertise includes cancers of the brain, prostate, breast, liver and pancreas, and he is accomplished in advanced treatment techniques—including the latest in external beam radiotherapy, stereotactic radiosurgery and image-guided radiotherapy. He completed his training in radiation oncology at Cedars-Sinai, and he also speaks Spanish and Russian.

STEPHEN SHIAO, MD, PHD
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, RADIATION ONCOLOGY AND BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

Dr. Shiao's clinical and research interests are in breast, melanoma and brain tumors. He has an extensive background in advanced radiotherapy techniques, such as imageguidance and stereotactic radiosurgery. Dr. Shiao's PhD is in immunology, and he's studying the interaction of radiotherapy and the immune system. He trained in radiation oncology at University of California, San Francisco.

RICHARD TULI, MD, PHD
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, RADIATION ONCOLOGY AND BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

Dr. Tuli's primary clinical and research interests are in gastrointestinal oncology. He has a strong interest in the multidisciplinary management of gastrointestinal cancer patients. His clinical research interests include investigating novel radiotherapy techniques, such as image-guidance and stereotactic ablation, to improve clinical outcomes and minimize toxicity. He trained in radiation oncology at Johns Hopkins.

PHYSICIAN SPOTLIGHT

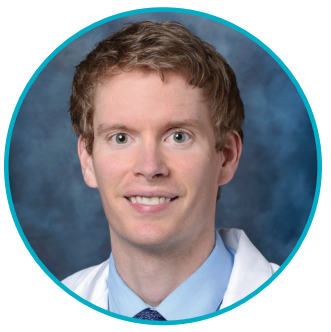
MITCHELL R. KAMRAVA, MD
DIRECTOR, BRACHYTHERAPY SERVICES
ASSISTANT CLINICAL PROFESSOR, RADIATION ONCOLOGY

Dr. Mitchell Kamrava is a board certified radiation oncologist who serves as the director of brachytherapy services at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. He has extensive experience in treating women with gynecologic cancers with all types of radiation including intensity modulated radiation therapy, image-guided brachytherapy, and stereotactic body radiation therapy (SBRT). He has spoken at both the national and international level on image-guided brachytherapy and SBRT for gynecologic cancers. He has also published on the use emerging use of SBRT for women with limited sites of metastatic disease with gynecologic cancers. He has published more than 50 peer-reviewed articles on brachytherapy, radiation therapy techniques, prostate cancer, gynecologic cancers and other cancers.

Dr. Kamrava serves on the American Board of Radiology Gynecologic Committee, is an associate editor for the Gynecologic section for Brachytherapy, a senior editor for the Gynecologic section for the International Journal of Radiation Oncology Biology and Physics, and a Co-editor for the Journal of Contemporary Brachytherapy. He also serves as a member of the National Cancer Institute Gynecologic Cancer Steering Committee.

His other clinical and research interests include treatments for prostate cancer, spine cancers and sarcomas.

He completed his fellowship in brachytherapy at UCLA. He also trained at Stanford University Hospital, the National Cancer Institute and graduated from University of California, San Diego.



ZACHARY ZUMSTEG, MD
RADIATION ONCOLOGIST
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, RADIATION ONCOLOGY

Dr. Zumsteg specializes in the treatment of head and neck, and genitourinary cancers. He completed his training in radiation oncology at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. In addition to his clinical practice, he is actively engaged in clinical research and is the author of numerous peer-reviewed publications, with articles appearing in journals such as Lancet Oncology, Journal of Clinical Oncology, JAMA Oncology, European Urology, Clinical Cancer Research and Cancer.

OVARIAN CANCER AWARENESS

UCLA's Efforts in the Battle Against Ovarian Cancer

Led by trailblazing physician-scientist Dr. Sanaz Memarzadeh, UCLA brings the fight to ovarian cancer

Researchers and clinicians at UCLA Health and the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA are working to better understand gynecologic cancers and provide excellent care to patients living with these diseases.

Physician-scientist Sanaz Memarzadeh, MD, PhD in collaboration with her colleagues at UCLA is helping to propel this mission forward. As a clinician, Dr. Memarzadeh has over 13 years of active practice as a board certified gynecologic oncologist. She is also an accomplished surgeon and is skilled in optimal cytoreduction, robotic surgery, and minimally invasive operations. Compassionate and adept, she specializes in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of all gynecologic pre-invasive and invasive diseases, including ovarian, endometrial, and cervical cancer.

Dr. Memarzadeh is not only passionate about caring for women with gynecologic cancers, she also recognized a vital need for basic science research in this area. During her fellowship, she was struck by how therapies for gynecologic diseases had not made significant advancements in several years. To address this urgent need and after a successful fellowship, Dr. Memarzadeh completed a Ph.D. in the department of Molecular Biology at UCLA. Today, in addition to being a skilled surgeon, maintaining her practice, and caring for her patients, she is performing scientific research at UCLA, focusing on the molecular pathways of gynecologic cancers in the hopes of better understanding these diseases and developing new, more effective therapies to help patients.

MEMARZADEH

As director of the G.O. (Gynecologic Oncology) Discovery Lab affiliated with the UCLA Eli and Edythe Broad Center of Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research and the UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center, Dr. Memarzadeh and her team seek to overcome the clinical problem of therapy resistance in two poorly understood and under-studied gynecologic malignancies: endometrial and ovarian carcinoma. The team is working to identify the tumor cells and cellular mechanisms responsible for therapy resistance and relapse of these cancers, discovering therapies that target these cells and mechanisms of resistance, and finding ways to identify patients for whom these treatments will be most effective.

The UCLA G.O. Discovery Lab team and Dr. Memarzadeh are involved in community efforts providing networking, education and support for women affected by ovarian cancers, and are particularly thankful for their successful and long-standing relationship with Paulinda Schimmel Babbini and The Ovarian Cancer Circle/Inspired by Robin Babbini team for their on-going efforts, commitment and continued support of Dr. Memarzadeh's ovarian cancer research. This powerful relationship supporting research at UCLA will benefit our community for generations to come.

Up to 85 percent of women who undergo standard treatment (surgery and chemotherapy) for high-grade serous ovarian cancer—the most common subtype of ovarian cancer—experience recurrence of disease. This cancer is so aggressive, in part, due to mutations in a protein called p53. When p53 is working correctly, it prevents damaged cells from reproducing by stopping their growth until the damage is repaired. If the damage is irreversible, p53 can promote cell death. However, when p53 is mutated, damaged cancer cells can continue to reproduce. This may be one way that cancer cells can evade standard chemotherapy. In collaboration with other investigators at UCLA, Dr. Memarzadeh's group tested the efficacy of a novel structure-based peptide, which is a chain of amino acids, called ReACp53. This peptide was specifically designed to interact with mutated p53 and reactivate its function. In pre-clinical testing, ReACp53 led to significant reductions in the size of ovarian cancer tumors studied in the lab. Dr. Memarzadeh and her collaborators are now evaluating if the addition of ReACp53 to standard treatments can prevent recurrence of ovarian cancer. They are also looking to identify biomarkers that can be used to predict which patients will benefit most from this approach. Because p53 is mutated in about half of all cancers, this therapeutic strategy may be applicable to many cancer types. Dr. Memarzadeh is working to test these treatments in a phase I clinical trial.

Finally, Dr. Memarzadeh is dedicated to teaching the next generation of physicians and researchers and holds a tenured position as a Professor at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. Dr. Memarzadeh takes a personal role in helping all those who work with her to ultimately achieve the goal of advancing and providing new hope for women with gynecologic cancers.

Community awareness and involvement has the power to make a world of difference in gynecologic cancer research and treatment options.

Join forces with UCLA to advance human health and improve outcomes and quality of life for patients and their loved ones. To support UCLA G.O. Discovery Lab, please visitgodiscoverylab.com.

PHYSICIAN SPOTLIGHT
GOTTFRIED E. KONECNY, MD

KONECNY

Gottfried E. Konecny is the lead clinician for gynecologic oncology in the Department of Medicine at UCLA. He obtained his medical degree and completed his residency training in obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Munich in Germany. Following his specialist training he focused on clinical breast cancer research and decided to move to the US to pursue postdoctoral studies in the laboratory of Dennis J. Slamon to participate in laboratory and clinical research that led to the approval of new breast cancer drugs. He subsequently undertook research and subspecialty training in gynecologic oncology by completing a gynecologic oncology fellowship at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota.

In 2007 he was recruited back to the University of California as a group leader to the Translational Oncology Research Laboratory of UCLA, to establish a laboratory for preclinical drug and clinical trial development in the area of gynecologic malignancies. It is the primary aim of his basic/clinical translational research in cancer medicine to develop novel targeted treatment strategies for patients diagnosed with breast, endometrial, ovarian and cervical cancer. These efforts are rooted in the understanding that breast, endometrial, ovarian and cervical cancer therapy has begun to shift from a one size fits all approach to a personalized approach, in which each patient is treated according to the specific genetic defects in the tumor. His initiatives are directed at using the latest and most effective technologies He is the principal investigator of multiple international clinical trials and over the last three years has served as the program committee lead in gynecologic oncology for the annual meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology.

Share These Five Facts About Ovarian Cancer

A better way of diagnosing and treating ovarian cancer is on the horizon. Dr. Sanaz Memarzadeh, a UCLA professor in obstetrics and gynecology and member of the UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center, is convinced of it. She and her colleagues are focused on discovering why epithelial ovarian cancer, one of the most common and aggressive subtypes of the disease, often reoccurs despite standard treatment.

Through a collaborative effort at UCLA, researchers are trying to restore the function of a key protein – known as p53 – that is commonly mutated in ovarian cancer. Dr. Memarzadeh and her collaborators are testing whether this approach, coupled with standard therapies, can prevent recurrence of ovarian cancer.

"My lab and I have really dedicated our focus and efforts to studying this disease," said Dr. Memarzadeh, who is also a member of the Eli and Edythe Broad Center of Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at UCLA. "By studying the biology of some of the most aggressive subtypes, we're hoping to one day soon make a real difference in how we approach and treat ovarian cancer."

Such commitment is vital. Although ovarian cancer is often considered a relatively rare cancer – accounting for only about 3 percent of all cancers in women – it causes more deaths than any other cancer of the female reproductive system. It's also the fifth-leading cause of cancer death in the United States.

In September, also known as Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, share these five facts with your friends and family:

OVARIAN CANCER CAN'T BE EASILY DETECTED

Ovarian tumors are responsible for a disproportionately large number of gynecologic cancer-related deaths, because no test can reliably detect the disease at an early stage, when it's most easily treatable.

WARNING SIGNS ARE OFTEN MISTAKEN FOR MORE COMMON ILLNESSES

The symptoms of ovarian cancer (such as feeling bloated or full, having stomach pain or trouble eating, and needing to urinate often) resemble other common ailments, which further impedes early detection.

TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR OVARIAN CANCER ARE EVOLVING AND NEED TO IMPROVE

For more than 40 years, ovarian cancer treatments, including surgery followed by chemotherapy, have remained largely the same. More recently new targeted agents are being incorporated into treatment regimens.

GENETICS CAN PLAY A ROLE

Epithelial ovarian cancer, the most common type, occurs most often in women ages 50 to 65, sometimes running in families. Genetic testing for two genes typically associated with breast and ovarian cancer – BRCA1, BRCA2 and others – is recommended for those who have a strong family history of breast or ovarian cancers.

MORE FUNDING IS NEEDED TO FIND BETTER TREATMENTS FOR OVARIAN CANCER

Ovarian cancer is particularly underfunded and understudied compared with other cancers. For example, in 2016, the National Cancer Institute invested $95.6 million in ovarian cancer research. That investment was 60 percent less than prostate cancer research (which received $241 million) and 82 percent less than breast cancer research (which received $519.9 million), which kills a proportionally fewer number of people who are diagnosed.

Information for this article was provided by UCLA Health. For more information, visit UCLAhealth.org