

## ASCO Annual Meeting -- May 30<sup>th</sup> – June 3, 2008 An Advocate's Perspective -- Jane Perlmutter

I like to identify key themes from each meeting. The three I identified are:

1. Biomarker research is maturing, but the problems associated with unreliable assays is becoming clearer
  
2. Breast cancer is at the forefront
  - Largest proportion of talks
  - More sophisticated biomarkers and more success with targeted therapies
  - Most of the awards

Speaker	Award	Talk
Craig Jordan	Karnofsky Award	The Paradoxical Actions of Estrogen in Breast Cancer: Survival or Death?
Mary-Claire King	Science of Oncology	Genomic Analysis of Inherited Breast and Ovarian Cancer
Patty Ganz	ACS Award	Improving Outcomes of Cancer Survivors: Lessons Learned from the Treatment of Breast Cancer
Hy Muss	Geriatric Oncology	Older Women with Breast Cancer: The Silent Majority

3. More acceptance of innovative clinical trial designs and analyses

Following are brief sessions of sessions I attended. Abstracts are available on the ASCO website (<http://www.abstract.asco.org/>) and authors are generally happy to provide PowerPoint.

Theme	Session	Speakers	Key Points
1, 2	HER2- Targeted Therapy: Why Bother Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Antonio Wolff</li> <li>• Soonmyung Paik</li> <li>• Michael Press</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herceptin does NOT help women who do NOT express the marker in the metastatic setting</li> <li>• It might help in the adjuvant setting, but more research is needed</li> <li>• Assays are still need improvement</li> </ul>
1, 3	Computation Aspects of Biomarker Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gary Clark</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clark: Outstanding, clear presentation of prognostic vs. predictive markers</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Michael Schell</li> <li>• Jack Lee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lee: Lovely example of incorporating biomarkers into phase 2 adaptive clinical trial in NSCL</li> </ul>
1, 2	Molecular Diagnostics in Breast Cancer: Prognosis and Prediction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peggy Porter</li> <li>• Laura van 't Veer</li> <li>• Dan Hayes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interesting, but preliminary work in node positive patients</li> </ul>
	Moving Beyond Band Aids: Ideas for Health Care Reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ezekiel Emanuel</li> <li>• Jonathan Gruber</li> <li>• Gail Wilensky</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are HUGE differences between Democrats and Republicans</li> </ul>
	Access to Investigational Drugs Off-Protocol: What do we Owe Patients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anthony Back</li> <li>• Ann Farrell</li> <li>• Ezekiel Emanuel</li> <li>• Judith Ochs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abigail Alliance's legal battle is dead</li> <li>• Access through compassionate care is possible, but a big hassle for drug companies and patients</li> <li>• FDA is trying to clarify policy</li> </ul>
2	Radiotherapy of Breast Cancer: Is Less More	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Krystyna Kiel</li> <li>• Jennifer Bellon</li> <li>• Frank Vicini</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Radiation reduces local recurrence AND extends survival</li> <li>• But, like chemo, many women are over-treated</li> <li>• We don't know who</li> <li>• Much research on more targeted and/or intense radiation seems promising</li> </ul>
2, 3	What Can We Learn About Breast Cancer from Neoadjuvant Systemic Therapy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jenny Chang</li> <li>• Laura Esserman</li> <li>• Mat Ellis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent talks with useful paradigm and early endpoint</li> <li>• Chang: Stem Cells</li> <li>• Esserman: MRI</li> <li>• Ellis: Adjuvant endocrine therapy may help identify who DOESN'T need chemo</li> </ul>

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<b>Theme</b>	<b>Session</b>	<b>Speakers</b>	<b>Key Points</b>
1, 3	Picking the Winners Through Biomarker Enrichment: Could This Be the End of Phase III Trials?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chris Takimoto</li> <li>• Johann Sebastian de Bono</li> <li>• Joes Baselga</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enriching trials through the use of biomarkers too early (e.g., Phase I and II) could cause you to miss good treatments</li> <li>• Enriching trials with GOOD biomarkers, especially in later phases (e.g., Phase III) can lead to smaller and more successful trials</li> </ul>
1, 2	ASCO/AACR Symposium: Advances in Translational Breast Cancer Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joe Gray</li> <li>• Max Wicha</li> <li>• Carlos Arteaga</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two excellent, one very dense talks</li> <li>• Gray: Beautiful, systems approach (i.e., integrated) to 'omics</li> <li>• Wicha: Stem cells in breast cancer</li> </ul>
3	The End of P Values? Why Alternative Methods to Making Inferences May be Superior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steven Hirschfield</li> <li>• Vance Berger</li> <li>• Andy Stone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No one wants to eliminate p values, but make sure that people interpret them correctly</li> <li>• Bayesian approaches are becoming more acceptable</li> <li>• Problems with traditional approaches are becoming better understood</li> </ul>