



Critical Questions

Sometimes the questions are more important than answers. This was the rationale behind SNM's recent groundbreaking molecular imaging summit, which brought together forward-thinking researchers, commercial sector representatives, and officials from national government/regulatory agencies to explore "Shaping the Future."

This first-of-its-kind forum allowed nearly 70 senior-level participants over 3 days to interact and explore questions about drug discovery, clinical issues, basic research, instrumentation/animal models, and standardization/education as they relate to molecular imaging and therapy.

In Search of Answers

Who are the most likely researchers to bridge the translational gap from molecular science to clinical practice? If targeting agents are used to determine or optimize biologically effective doses, what are the costs, safety issues, and other potential problems? What are the advantages and disadvantages of nuclear imaging in terms of clinical applications, and what other types of imaging will be seen as "molecular"? What is there "beyond FDG"? What are the barriers to the translation of new agents to the clinic? With the ability to detect and molecularly classify tumors less than a centimeter in size, which patients should be evaluated? Is there a future without animal models for human diseases? Will imaging enable quantifying known—or discovering new—parameters that are surrogate markers of response? What are the essential elements for an environment for training in molecular imaging science? How should chemists and others from the physical sciences be trained clinically? How can one best interest and recruit bright chemists and clinicians to molecular medicine?

With these and multiple other questions, panel presenters and attendees who are leaders in their fields addressed the future of molecular imaging. Panel presenters are developing statement papers on the various subjects—and questions—that were discussed; these statements will be published in future months.

As summit organizer, SNM recognizes the critical role for molecular imaging in future patient care and is working actively with the commercial sector to facilitate the movement of molecular discoveries from bench to bedside and with officials from the government and federal agencies to identify the needs and resources for advancing the nation's health care. Mathew Thakur, PhD, as the summit chair, assembled an exceptional molecular imaging think tank with assistance from SNM President Martin Sandler, MD; Alexander (Sandy) McEwan, MD; and Peter Conti, MD, PhD.

The participant list was impressive. Industry representatives came from Biogen Idec, Bioperspectives, Bracco Diagnostics Inc., Bristol-Myers Squibb Medical Imaging, Capintec Inc., Cardinal Health, GE Healthcare, IBA Molecular, Mallinckrodt

Inc., MDS Nordion, Merck & Company Inc., Philips, Siemens Medical Solutions USA, and Spectrum Dynamics. Also attending the end-of-July session in Key Biscayne, FL, were representatives from the FDA's Office for In Vitro Diagnostic Device Evaluation and Safety, the Los Alamos National Laboratory, the National Cancer Institute, and the National Institutes of Health's National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering.

Individuals attended from Cross Cancer Institute; Kimmel, M.D. Anderson, and Memorial Sloan-Kettering cancer centers; and George Mason, Texas A&M, Thomas Jefferson, Vanderbilt, and Yale universities, as well as the University of Southern California and the University of Pennsylvania.

SNM appreciates the participation and work of the individuals who served on the summit's panels: Eric D. Agdeppa, PhD; Steven Bodovitz; Chaitanya Divgi, MD, PhD (chair); Juri Gelovani, MD, PhD; and Richard Pestell, MD, PhD, drug discovery; Steve Larson, MD (chair); P. David Mozley; Adrian Nunn, PhD; and Albert Sinusas, MD, clinical issues; Malcolm Avison, PhD; David Geho, MD, PhD; John Gore, PhD; Lihong Wang, PhD; and Michael Welch, PhD (chair), basic research; Paul Acton, PhD, and Cheryl Marks, PhD (chair), instrumentation/animal model; and William Heetderks, MD, PhD, and Lalitha Shankar, MD, PhD (chair), standardization/education.

An Expanded Purpose, Name

For more than 50 years, the society has successfully educated the world about the potential of nuclear medicine. With SNM setting a new core purpose "to improve health care by advancing molecular imaging and therapy," you can see the importance of holding the "Shaping the Future" industry molecular imaging summit. More and more—in big and small ways—you will continue to see the society emphasizing its new strategic direction. By now, you may have noticed the increased use of the SNM acronym—as opposed to the "Society of Nuclear Medicine"—in our communications with members and the public. Prominently using "SNM" and the society's new tagline "Advancing Molecular Imaging and Therapy" maintains the society's core identity and moves it forward with the evolving molecular imaging and therapy field in a much more inclusive way. In the near future, the society will debut a number of other initiatives—including creating messages for marketing materials, developing a visual identity, and redesigning the Web site—as SNM continues its strategic course to become the recognized leader of molecular imaging and therapy and nuclear medicine. ✧



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