

# Symposium Speaker Spotlight: Dr. Randall Brand to evaluate clinical trial participation

The Hirshberg Foundation is delighted to announce that Randall Brand, MD will be joining the 17th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer to present **Should I Participate in a Clinical Trial?**

Dr. Brand will describe the importance of clinical trials for pancreatic cancer early detection and treatment. He will also discuss how to get involved in a clinical trial and review how to determine if participating in a particular clinical trial is the right step for a treatment plan.

Randall Brand, MD, is a gastroenterologist and Professor of Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. He is the academic director for the GI Division at UPMC Shadyside Hospital. Dr. Brand also directs the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center's GI Malignancy Early Detection, Diagnosis and Prevention Program and leads UPMC's Hereditary GI Tumor Clinic.

Dr. Brand's clinical interests include the early detection of pancreatic cancer, evaluating and caring for family members from pancreatic cancer-prone families, hereditary GI cancers, and evaluation of pancreatic cystic lesions. He participates in multiple NCI-, NIH- and DoD-funded research projects focused on the early diagnosis of pancreatic cancer.

We are excited to welcome back Dr. Brand to our Symposium to present **Should I Participate in a Clinical Trial?**

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# Symposium Speaker Spotlight: Dr. Raman Muthusamy to discuss Pancreatic Cysts Diagnosis and Treatment

The Hirshberg Foundation is pleased to announce that V. Raman Muthusamy, MD, MAS will be joining us at the 17th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer to discuss the diagnosis and treatment of pancreatic cysts.

Dr. V. Raman Muthusamy, Director of Endoscopy at UCLA Health and Professor of Clinical Medicine at David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, last shared important information on pancreatic cysts in 2021 as part of our [Patient and Family Webinar Series](#). Dr. Muthusamy will return to our Symposium stage to update us about pancreatic cysts.

With advances in imaging and technology, much is changing in the world of pancreatic cysts. Dr. Muthusamy will explain what pancreatic cysts are, how commonly they are found, the different kinds of cysts and the overall risk for any cyst. He will talk about the various diagnostic tests that are currently available to help determine what type of cyst a patient may have. He will also discuss the guidelines on how to manage the cysts.

V. Raman Muthusamy, MD, MAS is currently a Professor of Clinical Medicine at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and is the Medical Director of Endoscopy for the UCLA Health System. His clinical research interests include endoscopic eradication

techniques for Barrett's esophagus, clinical applications of EUS and ERCP as well as endoscope reprocessing. Dr. Muthusamy has helped develop quality metrics in Barrett's esophagus and led the initial multi-center evaluation of the first single-use duodenoscope. Previously, he was a faculty member at the University of California Irvine (UCI) Medical Center, where he served as the director of the GI Fellowship Program, as well as director of Endoscopic Ultrasound at the University of California, San Francisco. Dr. Muthusamy completed his undergraduate work at Stanford University with distinction and went to medical school at the University of Washington School of Medicine, where he graduated with Honors. His residency was undertaken at Duke University Medical Center where he served as assistant chief resident and traveled abroad to study evidence-based medicine under Dr. David Sackett at Oxford University. He completed his GI fellowship at UCSF before undertaking his advanced endoscopy fellowship at UCI, which he completed in 2001. Dr. Muthusamy is a past-president of the Orange County GI Society and a current Councilor and a Past- President of the Southern California Society of Gastroenterology. He is a Fellow of the American College of Gastroenterology (ACG), American Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE) and the American Gastroenterology Association (AGA). He recently completed two three-year terms as the ACG Governor for Southern California and is the immediate past Chair of the AGA 's Center for GI Innovation and Technology. He is an Associate Editor for the American Journal of Gastroenterology and previously served as Co-Director of the ASGE's Improving Quality and Safety in Your Endoscopy Unit course.

An important and evolving topic, we are honored to have Dr. Muthusamy present **Pancreatic Cysts: Diagnosing and Treatment in 2023.**

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# Symposium Speaker Spotlight: Survivor & Caregiver Panel

The Hirshberg Foundation is happy to welcome a panel of patients and caregivers to share their cancer stories with us at the 17th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer.

We are honored, each year, to share the stories of pancreatic cancer patients and caregivers. These honest and personal discussions give us all perspective, insight and sensitivity to the journey of both patients and loved ones once someone in the family is diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. This year we have an amazing line up of two survivors, Jay Sandler and Judith Anne Desjardins, and two caregivers, Shirley Peppers and Leslie Nelson to be moderated by Jenny Tran, PhD.

Dr. Tran works at the Simms/Mann Center, in addition to providing support within the UCLA Alhambra Cancer care clinic, and co-manages the psychosocial care within the UCLA Advanced GI Cancer Program. She provides a monthly online orientation for patients and family members to learn about the supportive care services available to them, including information about the Simms/Mann Center, Palliative Care, and Nutrition Oncology.

**Jay Sandler, Survivor,** Diagnosed December, 2012

I was born in Boston and came out to California in 1987. I have two Berkeley Grads, a boy and a girl and have 3 grandkids. I am an accountant by training working as a Controller in manufacturing firms and along the way I owned a Dunkin Donut and an Orange Julius. I'm currently working with friends at the

Canopy Cancer Collective as we started an online peer-to-peer [Pancreatic Cancer Support Group](#) through AnCan that meets on the 4th Thursday each month at 5:00PM (Pacific).

**Judith Anne Desjardins, Survivor,** Diagnosed October 7, 2020

I have been an Oncology Social Worker (1976-78), the wife of a prostate cancer patient (wrote the book, “Our Journey with Prostate Cancer: Empowering Strategies for Patients and Families” 2014), and produced the video “How To Beat Cancer in A Holistic Way” about my pancreatic cancer journey (2020 – present). I am cancer-free 29 months and have a holistic psychotherapy [practice](#).

**Shirley Peppers, Caregiver, wife of Roger Fox,** diagnosed May 2018

Roger was diagnosed five years ago and has been cancer free since his Whipple surgery in February 2019. He has continued to work as a money manager, investor and CPA. I retired in 2018 from a fundraising career for Stanford, Harvard and UCLA. I am now an artist.

After Roger’s diagnosis, I was on a panel with other classmates – two doctors and a cancer survivor – for our 50th Reunion. I talked about my role as a caregiver and that the grief and concern we feel for our loved one can’t be avoided. Also, I was introduced to a woman whose husband was also struggling with the after-effects of pancreatic cancer. We had phone conversations every few weeks which was invaluable to both of us to have someone to connect with in a similar situation. During the last few months, I have amped up my exercise routine substantially and it has moderated the anxiety and the circular worrying.

Roger continues cancer free and is slowly getting more energy.

**Leslie Nelson, Caregiver,** daughter of Dr. Norman Carabet,

diagnosed January, 2016

Our father Norman was a very healthy and active 82-year-old retired doctor at the time of diagnosis. His father was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer at 94. The fact that our father was a doctor was both a blessing and a curse. It gave him the ability to recognize symptoms early on. Yet it also made it impossible for him to not “manage” some of his healthcare alongside his Oncologist which wasn’t always in his best interest. Post diagnosis our father continued to live his life as fully as possible with a positive attitude. He traveled, enjoyed the company of his family and friends, built models and spent as much time as possible on his boat relaxing in the sun. Nothing made him happier than to share his knowledge with his grandchildren and then watch them as they applied those lessons in their own life. Throughout his journey he continued in his role as our patriarch and our hero.

We look forward to hosting this uplifting and informative **Panel Discussion: Perspectives from Survivors and Caregivers.**

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**Symposium Speaker Spotlight:  
Dr. KaKit P. Hui to discuss  
integrative East-West medicine  
for optimized health &**

# wellness

The Hirshberg Foundation is happy to announce KaKit P. Hui, MD will be joining us at the 17th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer to review Integrative East-West Medicine to Optimize Health & Wellness.

Stress-related problems are widespread for both cancer patients and their families. The person-centered, integrative East-West model will be helpful in these challenging times. The Center for East West Medicine at UCLA offers world-class medical care for both hospitalized and ambulatory patients in several locations, blending the best of modern Western and traditional Chinese medicine.

Ka-Kit Hui, M.D., F.A.C.P. is the Wallis Annenberg Professor in Integrative East-West Medicine and Founder and Director of the Center for East-West Medicine at the Department of Medicine of the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. Dr. Hui, a Fellow of the American College of Physicians, is an internationally acclaimed educator and researcher and is board-certified in Internal Medicine and Clinical Pharmacology, with an expertise in Geriatrics. He is a recognized authority on Chinese Medicine and integrative medicine, and is bilingual in Chinese and English. Since 1990s, Dr. Hui has served as an advisor to the World Health Organization (WHO) in different areas, including Standard Terminology in Traditional Chinese Medicine, Appropriate Integration of Traditional and Complementary Medicine (T&CM or TCM) into Health Systems and Health Care Services, and Quality of Academic Education in Traditional Medicine. He has also provided consultation to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), National Institutes of Health (NIH), health insurance companies, drug companies and the media, and has held visiting and honorary professorships in various universities throughout the world.

In December 1993, Dr. Hui founded the UCLA Center for East-West Medicine, which is one of the first integrative medicine centers in the United States. His basic and clinical investigations, as well clinical practices as both generalist and consultant, have provided him with unique insights into the concepts of regulation, homeostasis and balance, as well as the complementarity of modern medicine and traditional Chinese medicine. He has developed a model system of comprehensive care that is a patient-centered, problem-solving approach emphasizing health promotion, disease prevention, treatment, and is safe, effective, affordable and accessible to all. The Center's clinical program receives referrals from more than 500 physicians within UCLA for refractory problems, including many pain conditions, and continues to expand to meet the demand for a holistic patient care model within UCLA. Dr. Hui understands the importance of disseminating the Center's innovative healthcare model so that more people can benefit from it. The Center's extensive education programs offer fellowships, rotations, classes, workshops, conferences and events to physicians, medical residents, health care professionals, medical and non-medical students, and community members throughout the year.

We are privileged and honored to have Dr. Hui present **Integrative East-West Medicine to Optimize Health & Wellness.**

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## **Symposium Speaker Spotlight:**



# **Dr. Jenny Tran to discuss managing cancer related anxiety**

The Hirshberg Foundation is excited to announce Jenny Tran, PhD will be joining us at the 17th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer to discuss turning down the volume on worry to manage cancer related anxiety.

Cancer is a significant life stressor often accompanied by an increase in worry and anxiety. This presentation focuses on understanding how these responses can manifest themselves and impact patients. It will also offer patients and families a range of strategies to lessen the burden of worry and anxiety when it no longer serves us.

Jenny shares, "As the Clinical Psychology Postdoctoral Fellow, I have the privilege of providing comprehensive assessment and psychosocial care to patients and family members touched by cancer, in addition to providing multidisciplinary consultation in medical settings to other members of the healthcare team. Through an integration of evidence-based interventions and a human-centered approach, I attempt to meet patients where they are, to provide them with extra tools to navigate the cancer experience, and to create a space that integrates their strengths and values so that they feel genuinely seen and heard throughout their cancer care."

Dr. Tran works at the Simms/Mann Center, in addition to providing support within the UCLA Alhambra Cancer care clinic, and co-manages the psychosocial care within the UCLA Advanced GI Cancer Program. She provides a monthly online orientation for patients and family members to learn about the supportive care

services available to them, including information about the Simms/Mann Center, Palliative Care, and Nutrition Oncology.

After receiving a B.A. in psychology from University of California, San Diego, Dr. Tran worked for two years as a behavioral interventionist with children and adolescents with neurodevelopmental disorders. Through this role, she cultivated an interest in working with family members and caregivers who are actively involved in the care of their loved ones. Dr. Tran received extensive clinical training through several pre-internships including a life-changing year providing psychosocial care to patients with cancer here at the Simms/Mann Center. Her experience working with complex medical conditions highlighted the importance of understanding patient's needs through a biopsychosocial lens and the advantages of working with other members in a care team. Dr. Tran shares, "It is an immense honor to be invited into the lives of our patients and family, and to walk alongside them in this journey."

Providing patient with emotional support tools throughout treatment is an important piece to overall health and we are happy to have Dr. Jenny Tran present **Turning Down the Volume on Worry: Managing Cancer Related Anxiety.**

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## **The 5-Year Survival Rate Continues an Upward Trajectory**

# to 12%

The ACS statistics released today show an increase in the 5-year survival rate for all stages, revealing it to be 12% for the first time ever. The 5-year survival rate for pancreatic cancer survivors remained in the single digits for far too long but for the first time since 2017, we've seen survival rates increase two years in a row. Thanks to the [American Cancer Society's \(ACS\) Annual Cancer Facts & Figures Report](#), we're beginning to witness a shift. The results demonstrate something our Founder, Agi Hirshberg, has shared time and again, **"Never Give Up: The journey continues but an end is in sight."**

As the first Foundation to ever fund pancreatic cancer research, we offer a positive and hopeful message rather than focusing on statistics. There is value in understanding this important data, however, we've also seen survivors beat the odds and that is equally important to keep patients and families hopeful. As part of our [Patient Support Programs](#), our 2021 webinar, [Celebrate and Learn from 10, 20 and 30-year Survivors of Pancreatic Cancer](#), proved to be an extraordinary learning experience as these survivors, who continue to thrive today, shared their unique and personal journeys.

On the research front, Executive Director, Lisa Manheim, shares, **"We have the brightest in the world focusing on the disease and the change in these statistics reflects all of our hard work as a community. Witnessing this change in the statistics will hopefully be gratifying for our supporters who continue to fight for a cure and our patients who deserve to live a long and healthy life."** Our recent funding of [8 new Seed Grants](#) continues to drive research and advance our understanding of this disease. With projects focused on therapy and immunotherapy, early detection, and cancer biology, our teams of researchers in

leading medical institutions are striving to improve patient outcomes. Learn more about these Seed Grant projects in the most recent edition of our [Momentum Newsletter](#).

Pancreatic cancer remains the third-leading cause of cancer-related deaths and the ACS Facts & Figures report shows us that an estimated 64,050 Americans will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer this year, an increase of nearly 3% since 2022. However, there is hope and we are a community that Never Gives Up. It is important for each of us to [take action today](#). Make 2023 the year to establish a personal cancer prevention plan by learning the [risk factors](#). If you or someone you know has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, [contact us](#) today.

While the ACS report confirms that we are headed in the right direction, it reaffirms the critical need for our work to continue. As this new data is reviewed, we encourage you to be proactive and utilize the many resources available to our community. [Read more on the ACS report →](#)

## **Resources for Patients, Preventions, and Education**

[One-on-One Support](#)

[Patient & Family Webinars](#)

[Genetic Testing](#)

[Clinical Trials](#)