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Pancreatic cancer treatment innovations: Is immunotherapy the answer?

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Immunotherapy is an exciting and growing field. It has caused a paradigm shift in the treatment of metastatic melanoma and its role in many other cancers is growing. With the explosion of novel immune targets, completed and ongoing clinical trials and exciting combination therapies, immunotherapy is becoming ubiquitous in the daily life of an oncologist. Yet pancreatic cancer remains a fatal cancer with few effective therapies. Pancreatic cancer has been considered as a disease that may not be amenable to immunotherapy given the paucity of infiltrating immune cells in the tumor microenvironment. However, mounting evidence suggests that the pancreatic immune microenvironment is more complex, involving cells and receptors that transform the pancreas from its normal architecture into a complex mix of suppressor immune cells and dense extracellular matrix that allows for the unrestricted growth of cancer cells. Despite, early studies showing little activity, recent studies have showed more promising results.

Biography

Paul R Kunk has completed his Medical studies at the University of Tennessee in 2011 and Internal Medicine Training at the University of Virginia in 2014. He is currently the Chief Fellow of Hematology-Oncology at the University of Virginia. He has been active in the field of Gastrointestinal Malignancies; he has received the Joseph H Farrow Research Award to analyze the immune microenvironment of cholangiocarcinoma. He has published more than 15 papers in reputable journals and has presented at several national meetings.

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