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I have long been an advocate of the importance of integrating basic and clinical research. This approach has facilitated the development of completely novel approaches to cancer therapy built on biological principles.

Meet Dr. Ashworth

Alan Ashworth, Ph.D., F.R.S., is currently President of the UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center in San Francisco, a role he began in January 2015. He was previously Chief Executive of the Institute of Cancer Research (ICR) in London, United Kingdom.

A translational biologist and laboratory researcher, Dr. Ashworth's research focuses on understanding breast cancer genetics and applying what he learns to change the way patients are treated. He was a key part of the team that identified the BRCA2 breast cancer susceptibility gene, which is linked to an increased risk of some types of cancer. Ten years later, Dr. Ashworth found a way to kill off BRCA1- and 2-related tumor cells by treating them with Poly(ADP-ribose) polymerase (PARP) activity inhibitors, which amplify the damage caused by the broken DNA repair machinery in those cells.

Dr. Ashworth's Komen-funded research aims to identify genes and proteins that can be targeted with drugs to cause death of breast tumor cells, and identify which patients should get which treatments with the goal of identifying new therapy options for breast cancer patients.

Dr. Ashworth's Komen-funded Research Focus

Try to target the aberrations specific to the breast cancer genome -- the complete set of genes or genetic material present in breast cancer cells -- by defining the functional relationships between genes that are known to be associated with these aberrations. This research will generate a number of candidates to develop future targeted therapies.

SNAPSHOT

Komen ID

- Komen Scholar since 2010

Education

- BSc (Chemistry and Biochemistry) - Imperial College of Science and Technology, University of London
- PhD (Biochemistry) - University College London

Keywords

biomarkers; BRCA1; BRCA2; PARP inhibitors; high-throughput screens

Affiliate Region

