

In the news

FROM ASCO 2016

At this year's ASCO annual meeting, much excitement and anticipation surrounded Vice President Joe Biden's address regarding the National Cancer Moonshot Initiative. Resonating with the ASCO theme of Collective Wisdom, Biden highlighted how we need a change of mindset to tackle cancer, in which we combine diverse disciplines and place more emphasis on the importance of prevention, access, and affordability. The first Cancer Moonshot Summit will convene in late June, and Biden made a plea to the ASCO audience that he needs our help in shaping the answers to fundamental societal challenges on cancer, and invited the audience to submit suggestions.

Two abstracts, with full findings published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, showed that for women with early stage breast cancer, the risk of disease recurrence was reduced by 34%, when hormonal therapy with aromatase inhibitors was extended for 5 years (to 10 years in total), without compromising patients' quality of life.

A large-scale genomic analysis showed that the mutational profiles of circulating tumour cells (CTCs) closely mirrored the genetic changes detected in traditional biopsy samples. Samples from 15,191 patients with lung, breast, and colorectal cancer, among others, were compared with biopsy specimens and, in 94–100% of situations, the same mutations were present in CTCs, indicating that so-called liquid biopsies provide an accurate indication of the genomic landscape of the tumour.

Elderly patients with glioblastoma have a poor survival duration, but the results of a randomized phase III trial provide new hope for this population. The addition of temozolomide chemotherapy to short-course radiation treatment, followed by maintenance temozolomide, significantly improved patient survival (33% reduced risk of death), without compromising quality of life.

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