NCI’s Clinical Trials Cooperative Group Program

Key Points

- The Clinical Trials Cooperative Group Program is designed to promote and support clinical trials (research studies) of new cancer treatments, explore methods of cancer prevention and early detection, and study quality of life and rehabilitation issues.
- Cooperative groups include researchers, cancer centers, and community physicians throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe.

The Clinical Trials Cooperative Group Program, which is sponsored by the National Cancer Institute (NCI), is designed to promote and support clinical trials (research studies) of new cancer treatments, explore methods of cancer prevention and early detection, and study quality of life issues and rehabilitation during and after treatment. Cooperative groups include researchers, cancer centers, and community physicians throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe. They work with NCI to identify important questions in cancer research and to design clinical trials to answer these questions.

The Cooperative Group Program involves more than 1,700 institutions that contribute patients to group-conducted clinical trials. Thousands of individual investigators also participate.
in NCI-supported cooperative group studies. Cooperative groups place more than 22,000 new patients into cancer treatment clinical trials each year.

The groups differ in structure and research focus. Some groups, such as the Children’s Oncology Group, consist of investigators that have a particular medical specialty (e.g., pediatrics); some, such as the Radiation Therapy Oncology Group, study a specific type of cancer therapy; and others, such as the Gynecologic Oncology Group, focus on a group of related cancers. The groups share a common purpose—to develop and conduct large-scale trials in multi-institutional settings.

The Cooperative Group Program was established in 1955 following congressional approval to increase support for studies of chemotherapy for cancer. Congress initially appropriated $5 million for NCI to establish the Chemotherapy National Service Center. By 1958, 17 cooperative groups were part of the Center. At that time, the main focus of the program was to test new anticancer agents from NCI’s drug development program. The emphasis on chemotherapy gradually shifted to studies of combined therapy approaches in cancer treatment.

People interested in taking part in a clinical trial should talk with their doctor. Information about clinical trials is available from the Cancer Information Service (CIS) at 1–800–4–CANCER and the NCI booklets Taking Part in Clinical Trials: What Cancer Patients Need to Know and Taking Part in Clinical Trials: Cancer Prevention Studies. These booklets describe how research studies are carried out and explain their possible benefits and risks. In addition, the NCI’s Web site provides general information about clinical trials at http://cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/ on the Internet. It also links to PDQ®, the NCI’s cancer information database. PDQ contains detailed information about specific ongoing clinical trials in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere. The CIS also provides information from PDQ.
Clinical Trials Cooperative Groups

American College of Radiology Imaging Network
Bruce J. Hillman, M.D., Chair
14th Floor
1101 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
http://www.acrin.org

American College of Surgeons Oncology Group
Samuel A. Wells, Jr., M.D., Chair
American College of Surgeons Oncology Group
Box 3627
Duke University Medical Center
Durham, NC 27710
http://www.acosog.org

Cancer and Leukemia Group B
Richard L. Schilsky, M.D., Chair
Suite 2000
208 South LaSalle Street
Chicago, IL 60604–1154
http://www.calgb.org

Children's Oncology Group
Gregory Reaman, M.D., Chair
Post Office Box 60012
Arcadia, CA 91066–6012
http://www.childrensoncologygroup.org

Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group
Robert L. Comis, M.D., Chair
Suite 1100
1818 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103
http://www.ecog.org

European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer
Françoise Meunier, M.D., Director General
EORTC Central Office
Avenue E. Mounier 83, BTE 11
B–1200 Brussels
Belgium
http://www.eortc.be/default.htm

Gynecologic Oncology Group
Philip J. DiSaia, M.D., Chair
Suite 1020
Four Penn Center
1600 John F. Kennedy Boulevard
Philadelphia, PA 19103
http://www.gog.org

National Cancer Institute of Canada, Clinical Trials Group
Joseph L. Pater, M.D., Director
Queen’s University
82-84 Barrie Street
Kingston, Ontario K7L 3N6
Canada
http://www.ctg.queensu.ca/

National Surgical Adjuvant Breast and Bowel Project
Norman Wolmark, M.D., Chair
Fifth Floor
East Commons Professional Building
Four Allegheny Center
Pittsburgh, PA 15212–5234
http://www.nsabp.pitt.edu

North Central Cancer Treatment Group
Jan C. Buckner, M.D., Chair
Fourth Floor
Plummer Building
200 First Street, SW.
Rochester, MN 55905
http://ncctg.mayo.edu
Sources of National Cancer Institute Information

Cancer Information Service
Toll-free: 1–800–4–CANCER (1–800–422–6237)
TTY (for deaf and hard of hearing callers): 1–800–332–8615

NCI Online
Internet
Use http://cancer.gov to reach the NCI’s Web site.

LiveHelp
Cancer Information Specialists offer online assistance through the LiveHelp link on the NCI’s Web site.

This fact sheet was reviewed on 2/19/03

Editorial changes were made on 3/14/03