Translational Research Session Speakers

Suzanne Baker, PhD, Director, Division of Brain Tumor Research, St Jude Children's Research Hospital
*Ohlfest Memorial Lecturer
“Pediatric High-Grade Glioma” Cancer at the Crossroads of Development and Epigenetics"
Dr. Baker's research is focused on elucidating the mechanisms driving diffuse high-grade glioma (HGG) in children. There are a number of distinguishing features of pediatric HGG that indicate a unique pathogenesis; including the occurrence of diffuse intrinsic pontine gliomas (DIPGs), which arise in the brainstem. Her group is working towards integrating the latest genomic findings from primary human tumors to develop improved models of the distinct subgroups of pediatric diffuse HGG to use for mechanistic studies and preclinical testing of selective therapies.

Michael Graner, PhD, Associate Professor, Neurosurgery, University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus
“Trouble Inside and Out: Glioma Exosomes Alter Signaling, Metabolism, and the Extracellular Environment of Normal Brain Cells”
Dr. Graner's research focuses on the immunology and biology of brain tumors. From a clinical perspective, he is interested in vaccine design and implementation, which includes the search for appropriate combinations of therapies to enhance immune responses or to downplay the role of tumor-induced immune suppression. He is a patent-holder on a vaccine process that generates a material from tumors that is enriched for a class of proteins called chaperones (sometimes called stress proteins or heat shock proteins). His group is moving towards a clinical trial in both human and canine patients.

Jann Sarkaria, MD, Professor of Radiation Oncology, Mayo Clinic
Title TBD
Dr. Sarkaria’s research is focused on developing novel therapeutic strategies for people with glioblastoma multiforme (GBM) and brain metastases. Global interests in the lab include understanding the basis of resistance to chemotherapy and radiation, identifying methods to overcome therapy resistance, integration of novel signal transduction inhibitors into conventional therapies for newly diagnosed or recurrent GBM, and use of next-generation sequencing and proteomics to guide individualized therapy for patients with GBM.

Andrew Venteicher, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor and Neurosurgical Director of the Center for Skull Base and Pituitary Surgery, Department of Neurosurgery, University of Minnesota
Title TBD
Dr. Venteicher specializes in minimally invasive, endoscopic endonasal, and traditional open microsurgical approaches to cranial base tumors and cerebrovascular diseases. He is the neurosurgical director of the Center for Cranial Base Surgery, which focuses on diagnosis and comprehensive treatment for patients with tumors along the base of the brain, pituitary gland, and brainstem.