

# ASCO names Cancer Advance of the Year

January 20 2015, by Kelly Baldwin

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The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) for the first time announced its cancer Advance of the Year: the transformation of treatment for the most common form of adult leukemia. Until now, many patients with chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) have had few effective treatment options. Four newly approved therapies, however, are poised to dramatically improve the outlook for patients with the disease.

Nearly 120,000 Americans are living with CLL, and approximately 90 percent are diagnosed over age 55.[1,2] The newly approved treatments for CLL include:

- Two immunotherapy drugs for previously untreated CLL, obinutuzumab and ofatumumab (in combination with standard chemotherapy)
- Two molecularly targeted drugs for treatment-resistant or relapsed CLL, ibrutinib and idelalisib

"These new therapies fill an enormous need for thousands of patients living with CLL," said Gregory Masters, MD, FACP, FASCO, ASCO expert and co-executive editor of the report. "For many older patients, especially, these drugs essentially offer the first chance at effective treatment, since the side effects of earlier options were simply too toxic for many to handle."

The Advance of the Year was announced as part of Clinical Cancer Advances 2015: ASCO's Annual Report on Progress Against Cancer,

released today.

The report was published in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology* and on ASCO's [cancer research](#) advocacy website, <http://www.CancerProgress.Net/CCA>. Now in its 10th year, the report was developed under the direction of an 18-person editorial board of experts from a wide range of oncology specialties. It features:

- The top [cancer](#) research advances of the past year: Identifying major trends in cancer prevention and screening, treatment, quality of life, survivorship, and tumor biology
- A Decade in Review: Recounting the most remarkable improvements in cancer care since the first issue of *Clinical Cancer Advances*
- The 10-Year Horizon: Previewing trends likely to shape the next decade of cancer care, including genomic technology, nanomedicine, and health information technologies, such as ASCO's CancerLinQ initiative
- Progress in Rare Cancers: Highlighting promising early achievements in treating certain uncommon but devastating childhood and adult cancers

The *Clinical Cancer Advances* report also retains its emphasis on the unique and vital role of federally funded research in advancing progress against cancer.

"This has truly been a banner year for CLL and for [clinical cancer research](#) as a whole. Advances in cancer prevention and care, especially those in precision medicine, are offering stunning new possibilities for patients," said ASCO President Peter P. Yu, MD, FASCO. "It's also remarkable that almost one-third of the year's top studies were made possible by federal research dollars. We cannot underestimate the importance of federal investment for answering critical [cancer care](#)

questions, particularly in rare, under-studied cancers."

"The U.S. federal cancer research enterprise faces critical funding challenges that threaten the pace of research progress," said Richard L. Schilsky, MD, FACP, FASCO, ASCO's Chief Medical Officer. "Now is the time to increase our nation's investment in cancer research to ensure that we can build on these advances well into the future."

**More information:** [www.cancerprogress.net/CCA](http://www.cancerprogress.net/CCA)

Provided by American Society of Clinical Oncology

Citation: ASCO names Cancer Advance of the Year (2015, January 20) retrieved 14 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-01-asco-cancer-advance-year.html>

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