

Undergraduate Oncology Objectives

- Demonstrate the ability to perform a focused medical history when cancer is suspected (i.e., symptoms based on primary cancer location and symptoms related to spread to common metastatic sites, risk factors and family history).
- Demonstrate an understanding of presentations of cancer that represent emergencies (e.g., superior vena cava obstruction, cardiac tamponade, spinal cord compression, pulmonary embolism, symptomatic brain metastases, cancer-related bleeding).
- Demonstrate the ability to perform a focused physical examination for a patient with suspected cancer with emphasis on the primary cancer and possibly sites of metastases.
- Describe nonspecific physical symptoms and signs associated with common cancers (e.g., unexplained weight loss, pain, lymphadenopathy, palpable mass, bleeding, thrombosis, change in bowel habit, biliary tract obstruction).
- Describe the importance of tissue sampling for diagnosis of malignancy and for identification of molecular predictive factors.
- Identify appropriate diagnostic and treatment referral algorithms for patients with common cancers.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the epidemiology, risk factors, prevention, screening, presentation, diagnosis, staging, basics of treatment, prognosis and follow-up/survivorship care for the most common cancers: prostate cancer, lung cancer, breast cancer, colorectal cancer and non-melanoma skin cancer.
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of novel targeted agents and immunotherapy and how they differ from traditional cytotoxic chemotherapy.
- Describe general principles of how radiation is used to treat cancer and different types of radiation (e.g., external beam, brachytherapy, stereotactic radiation).
- Demonstrate an understanding of the role of a primary care physician in the treatment and follow-up of cancer patients.
- List cancers which are screened for in the periodic health exam and the specific investigations that are used (cervical, breast, colon, prostate).
- Demonstrate an understanding of treatment intent (curative vs adjuvant vs palliative); understand some metastatic cancers are curable and be able to identify when a cancer situation is likely incurable.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the palliative care physician/team and family physician in the care of cancer patients.

References:

Tam V, Ingledeu PA, Berry S Et al. *Developing Canadian oncology education goals and objectives for medical students: a national modified Delphi study.* CMAJ Open. 2016. 2016 Jul 14;4(3): E359-E364.