



Multi-Institutional Phase I Trials of Anticancer Agents

One of the most difficult roadblocks to curing cancer is the time and delay associated with evaluating new cancer treatments. Afshin Dowlati, MD, Director of Early Drug Development at the Ireland Cancer Center at University Hospitals of Cleveland and the Case Comprehensive Cancer Center, recently published an international study entitled, “Multi-Institutional Phase I Trials of Anticancer Agents,” in the [*Journal of Clinical Oncology*](#) (April 20, 2008), assessing the multi-institutional approach taken by many cancer centers evaluating new cancer treatments during clinical trials of these agents. An editorial accompanying the article found the findings of Dowlati et al surprising, and predicted this study will change the approach taken by most centers in the years to come.

Contrary to what most would assume as true, Dr. Dowlati’s article shows multi-institutional phase I studies as less effective than studies performed at a single institution. Performing such studies at a single institution resulted in faster results and more consistent data than studying the new treatment at multiple institutions simultaneously. When all of the patients on a trial are cared for by a small group of physicians, a more consistent evaluation of the new treatment is possible.

“We were somewhat surprised by the clear differences we observed. It reinforces our approach at the Ireland Cancer Center, to emphasize clinical trials in which we take the lead and conduct the evaluation of new treatments in a focused and dedicated manner. In the end this will help patients more than simply adding one or two patients to a study conducted elsewhere,” stated Dr. Dowlati.