CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY
Case Comprehensive Cancer Center

NCI Comprehensive Cancer Center
A Cancer Center Designated by the National Cancer Institute

Case Comprehensive Cancer Center

Cellular Plasticity and the Tumor Ecosystem

Wednesday August 5th, 2026 – Thursday August 6th, 2026 (Tinkham Veale University Center)

Hosted by:

Christopher Hubert, PhD	Assistant Professor of Biochemistry Case Western Reserve University
Justin Lathia, PhD	Scientific Director and Melvin H. Burkhardt Endowed Chair in Neuro-Oncology Cleveland Clinic Research Reza Khatib MD Endowed Professor and Co-Leader, Molecular Oncology Program Case Comprehensive Cancer Center
Ofer Reizes, PhD	Laura J Fogarty Endowed Chair for Uterine Cancer Research Cleveland Clinic Research
Khalid Sossey-Alaoui, PhD	Faculty Research Staff MetroHealth Medical Center
Jennifer Yu, MD, PhD	Professor, Department of Radiation Oncology and Cancer Sciences Cleveland Clinic Research

Wednesday August 5th, 2026

8:15 - 8:50am **Registration/Breakfast**

8:50 - 9:00am **Welcome Remarks from Cancer Center Director and Organizing Committee**

9:00 - 10:40am **Session 1: Immune Interactions**

Lily Wang, PhD
Professor, Cancer Sciences, Cleveland Clinic Research
Title: *Decoding VISTA: Multipronged Mechanisms in the Tumor Microenvironment and Therapeutic Implications*

Natalie Silver, MD
Director, Head and Neck Cancer Research, Cleveland Clinic Research
Title: *The Intratumoral Microbiome as a Modifiable Regulator of the Tumor Immune Microenvironment*

Sendurai Mani, PhD
Dean's Professor of Translational Oncology, Brown University
Title: *Dividing to Adapt and Gain Stemness and Plasticity to Drive Therapeutic Resistance and Metastasis*

Yuxuan Miao, PhD
Associate Professor of Cancer Research, University of Chicago
Title: *Dissect the Stemness Associated Cancer Immune Resistance*

10:40 - 10:55am **Coffee Break and Poster Browsing**

10:55 - 12:10pm **Session 2: Top Abstracts**

Sherman Chan
PhD Candidate, Ohio State University (Monica Venere)
Title: *The Efficacy of a Novel Monopolar Spindle 1 Inhibitor in the Treatment of Glioblastoma*

Vrishabhadev Sathish Kumar
MD/PhD Candidate, Case Western (Tyler Miller)
Title: *Single-Cell Analysis of Adult and Pediatric CNS Tumors Reveals a Shared Framework of Immunomodulatory Myeloid Programs Within the Tumor Microenvironment.*

Molly Guthrie
PhD Candidate, Cleveland Clinic (Jennifer Yu)
Title: *Targeting SMARCA5 Alters Chromatin Accessibility in Glioblastoma Stem Cells to Promote Cellular Differentiation*

Jonathan Mitchell
MD/PhD Candidate, University of Miami (Defne Bayik/Dennis Watson)
Title: *Glioblastoma Mitochondria Transfer Reprograms Tumor-Associated Astrocytes to Drive a Pro-Tumorigenic Stem Cell Niche*

Mikayla Ybarra
PhD Candidate, Cleveland Clinic (Chao Ma)
Title: *Engineering Immunocompetent Human In Vitro Multiple Myeloma Bone Marrow Model for Disease Modeling and Therapy Screening*

Daniel Leon
MD Candidate, University of Chicago (Yuxuan Miao)
Title: *Integrated Analysis of Stemness-associated Immune modulatory Circuits in Squamous Cell Carcinomas Reveals SOX2-directed Immunosuppressive Stem Cell-Neutrophil-Macrophage Axis*

12:10 - 1:20pm **Lunch - Editors**
Natalie Cain, PhD
Executive Editor, Journal of Experimental Medicine

Catherine Landis, PhD
Scientific Editor, Cell Stem Cell

1:20 - 3:00pm **Session 3: Metabolism**
Boaz Tirosh, PhD
Professor of Biochemistry, Case Western Reserve University
Title: Direct Activation of Immunogenic Cell Death Through the KDEL Receptors

Deanna Tiek, PhD
Assistant Professor, Cancer Sciences, Cleveland Clinic Research
Title: *Redox Stress and Adaptation in Glioblastoma*

Abhishek Chakraborty, PhD
Assistant Professor, Cancer Sciences, Cleveland Clinic Research
Title: *Tumor Intrinsic Metabolic Perturbations Regulate Cell State and Tumor-Immune Interactions in Kidney Cancer*

Daniela Matei, MD
Professor of Gynecologic Oncology & Hematology/Oncology, Houston Methodist Hospital
Title: *Intercepting Drivers of Transcriptional and Metabolic Plasticity in Platinum Resistant Ovarian Cancer*

3:00 - 3:15pm **Coffee Break and Poster Browsing**

3:15 - 4:55pm **Session 4: Novel Technologies**
Reshmi Parameswaran, PhD
Associate Professor of Medicine, Case Western Reserve University
Title: *CAR-T Therapy for Liquid and Solid Cancers*

Hongjun Song, PhD
Perelman Professor of Neuroscience, University of Pennsylvania
Title: *Patient-Derived Glioblastoma Organoids for Translational and Basic Research*

Tyler Miller, MD, PhD
Paul and Betsy Shiverick Professor of Immuno-Oncology, Case Western Reserve University
Title: *Mapping and Targeting Immunosuppressive Myeloid Plasticity in the Glioma Ecosystem*

Andrew Ewald, PhD
Virginia De Acetis Professor in Basic Cancer Research, Johns Hopkins Medical Institute
Title: *Cell Intrinsic and Microenvironmental Regulation of Cancer Cell State*

5:00 - 7:00pm **Poster Session and Reception**

Thursday August 6th, 2026

8:00 - 8:30am **Registration/Breakfast**

8:30 - 10:10am **Session 5: Druggable Targets**

Monica Venere, PhD
Associate Professor of Radiation Oncology, The Ohio State University
Title: *Targeting FACT to Shift the Undifferentiated State of ZFTA-RELA Fusion Driven Ependymoma*

Huiping Liu, MD, PhD
Professor of Pharmacology and Medicine, Northwestern University
Title: *AI-accelerated targeting of circulating tumor stem cells and immune ecosystems*

Christopher Hubert, PhD
Assistant Professor of Biochemistry, Case Western Reserve University
Title: *Identification and Targeting of WDR5 to Suppress Glioblastoma Growth and Self-renewal*

Khalid Sossey-Alaoui, PhD
Faculty Research Staff, MetroHealth Medical Center
Title: *Therapeutic Targeting of Triple negative Breast Cancer Tumors Through the Inhibition of YB1*

10:10 - 10:25am **Coffee Break and Networking**

10:25 - 11:25am **Session 6: Top Abstracts**

Derrick Ong Sek Tong, PhD
Assistant Professor of Physiology, National University of Singapore
Title: *A Non-Canonical Role of HDAC7 in Promoting GBM Proliferation by Disrupting the TAZ/14-3-3h Interaction*

Darcie Seachrist, PhD
Postdoctoral Fellow, Cleveland Clinic (Ruth Keri)
Title: *Leveraging Focal Adhesion Dependencies in CDH1-Deficient Lobular Breast Cancer*

Raminderjit Kaur, PhD
Senior Research Associate, Case Western (Christopher Hubert)
Title: *Proteomimetic Targeting of the MYC–WDR5 Axis Impairs Glioblastoma Cancer Stem Cell Function*

Tyler Alban, PhD
Project Staff, Cleveland Clinic (Timothy Chan)
Title: *Tumor Ecosystem and Microbiome Features Associated with Efficacy from Avelumab-based Multimodal Therapy in a Phase III Randomized Trial*

Madoka Kawaguchi, PhD
Postdoctoral Fellow, Northwestern University (Huiping Liu)
Title: *Circulating Immune Cell Clusters: An Early and Dynamic Window with Therapeutic Potential in CTC-Associated Metastasis*

11:25 - 12:10pm **Session 7: Top 3 Abstracts**

Sravya Palavalasa, MD, PhD
Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Michigan (Daniel Wahl)
Title: *Microglia Derived Acetylated Amino Acids Promote Treatment Resistance in Glioblastoma*

Isobel Fetter
PhD Candidate, UC Santa Cruz (Shaheen Sikandar)
Title: *ROBO4 Sustains Basal-Like Breast Cancer Plasticity via Canonical Wnt Signaling*

Daniel Silver, PhD
Instructor of Pathology, Cleveland Clinic (Justin Lathia)
Title: *Phosphorylated Tau as a Driver of Invasive Progression in Glioblastoma*

12:10 - 1:55pm **Lunch – Industry Sponsors**

Quanterix
Daniel J. Silver, PhD
Instructor of Pathology, Cleveland Clinic Research
Title: *Examinations of the Glioblastoma Microenvironment with the Akoya PhenoCycler-Fusion*

Ladan Gheiratmand, PhD
Senior Field Application Scientist, Quanterix
Title: *From Tissue to Insight: Ultrahigh-plex Spatial Proteomics with the Akoya PhenoCycler-Fusion*

Leica Microsystems
Kit-Yi Yam, PhD
Solutions Sales Specialist, Leica Microsystems
Title: *Uncovering Spatial Biology with Multiplex Imaging*

1:55 - 3:35pm **Session 8: Epigenetic Regulation**

Sameer Agnihotri, PhD
Associate Professor of Neurological Surgery, University of Pittsburgh
Title: *Targeting Metabolic and Developmental Vulnerabilities in Pediatric High-Grade Gliomas*

Liangqi Xie, PhD
Assistant Professor, Infection Biology, Cleveland Clinic Research
Title: *Reverting Acquired Resistance to Targeted Therapy in Glioblastoma*

Yi Zhang, PhD
Assistant Professor of Biochemistry, Case Western Reserve University
Title: *tRNA-Mediated Protein Arginylation: A Non-Canonical Sensor of Microenvironmental Stress in Cancer*

Berkley Gryder, PhD
Assistant Professor of Genetics and Genome Sciences, Case Western Reserve University
Title: *3D Epigenomics Reveals Principles of Gene Control and Drug Response in Cancer*

3:35 - 3:50pm **Coffee Break and Networking**

3:50 - 5:30pm **Session 9: Cancer Neuroscience**

Dean Tang, PhD
Chair of Pharmacology and Therapeutics, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center
Title: *Linking an Intrinsic Neurogenic Transcriptional Program in Undifferentiated AR-/lo Prostate Cancer Cells to Novel Therapeutic Targets*

Prasenjit Dey, PhD
Associate Professor of Oncology, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center
Title: *Pancreatic Steatosis Drives Neurogenesis and Pancreatic Cancer*

Justin Lathia, PhD
Scientific Director and Melvin H. Burkhardt Endowed Chair in Neuro-Oncology, Cleveland Clinic
Title: *Non-Canonical Glioblastoma Cellular Interactions Drive Tumor Growth and Represent Next-Generation Therapies*

Jennifer Yu, MD, PhD
Professor, Department of Radiation Oncology and Cancer Sciences, Cleveland Clinic Research
Title: *Regional Neural Activity in Glioblastoma Progression.*

5:30 - 5:40pm **Closing Remarks and Poster/Short Talk Awards**

Special Thanks To Our Sponsors!!

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