PROJECT TITLE: Evaluating lymphopenia and treatment outcomes in patients with gynecologic cancers

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Project Description

Patients with locally advanced cervical, vaginal, and endometrial cancers are often treated with combined chemotherapy and radiation therapy for tumor control and hopeful cure. Their treatment course includes 5 weeks of external beam radiation therapy with chemotherapy followed by internal radiation therapy (brachytherapy). Patients will often experience lymphopenia (low white blood cell counts) as a result of pelvic radiation and concurrent chemotherapy. Retrospective studies have demonstrated decreased progression free survival and overall survival in patients who develop severe lymphopenia while undergoing their cancer care possibly due to poor immune surveillance. We are interested in evaluating our own institutional data. The project would be a retrospective study. The student would perform chart review on patients with gynecologic cancers, extracting information from the medical chart including blood counts, treatment outcomes, and follow up data. Upon completion of the project, the student would have the opportunity to draft a manuscript with the goal to submit for publication.

The student would also have the opportunity to learn more about the field of radiation and gynecologic oncology and would be able to spend time shadowing in clinic and observing brachytherapy procedures. We are looking for a student who has an interest in oncology, is self-motivated, and has an eagerness to learn. If accepted for this position, the student will have to complete both HIPAA and CITI training. This can be done in the first week of the rotation. IRB approval for the project will be obtained by the department of radiation oncology prior to starting.