

# AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CLINICAL ONCOLOGY—ASP—JUNIOR DEVELOPMENT AWARD IN GERIATRIC ONCOLOGY

## *Award Recipient:*



MICHELE BASCHE, MD  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

## PROJECT:

A PHASE I/II CLINICAL TRIAL OF CAPECITABINE WITH OXALIPLATIN IN PATIENTS 70 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER WITH METASTATIC COLORECTAL CANCER

## MENTORSHIP TEAM:

S. GAIL ECKHARDT, MD

DANIEL GUSTAFSON, PHD

ROBERT S. SCHWARTZ, MD

The majority of colorectal cancer diagnoses and deaths occur in persons 70 years of age or older. Recent studies conducted in a younger population show that new chemotherapy regimens extend the lives of persons with metastatic colorectal cancer. Some studies have also shown that treatment with new regimens helps preserve the quality of life of persons with metastatic colon cancer. However, too few older persons were included in these trials to know whether older persons experience the same benefits of treatment without suffering undue toxicity.

Most older adults suffer from co-morbidities and age-related physiologic changes that mandate specific investigation of therapies within the elderly population. This is particularly true of agents with a small therapeutic window, such as chemotherapeutic agents. I was funded to evaluate a new treatment regimen for metastatic colorectal cancer in older persons and will conduct a trial to establish the appropriate dose of the chemotherapy regimen capecitabine with oxaliplatin in persons 70 years of age and older. Validated tools will be used to document changes in physical functioning occurring during treatment. Once the correct dose is established in the older population, I will study how effective

this regimen is for metastatic colorectal cancer in older persons. The study will also assess changes in physical functioning which occur when older persons are treated with this regimen over a prolonged period of time. My research aims to develop a treatment regimen for older persons with metastatic colorectal cancer with demonstrated effectiveness both in treating colon cancer and in preserving quality of life and physical functioning.

I am the first “graduate” of the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center combined geriatrics/oncology training program and was recruited to the faculty to specifically develop clinical, research, and teaching programs in geriatric oncology. As part of this bridge between geriatrics and oncology, I am developing a curriculum to train hematology/oncology fellows in geriatric assessment of physical and cognitive functioning, gait stability, nutrition, polypharmacy, and social support structures necessary to care for the older adult with cancer. For geriatrics fellows, I am developing a reciprocal program focused on treatment decisions, goals of therapy, and management of anticipated toxicities in the older adult with cancer.

