

Interdisciplinary Training in Behavioral Oncology

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Abstract:

Our overall goal is to train the next generation of behavioral oncology scientists to conduct interdisciplinary cancer prevention and control research spanning the continuum of prevention, early detection, treatment, and survivorship. Research training in behavioral oncology is particularly well suited to benefit from an influx of scientists capable of pursuing multi- and inter-disciplinary approaches that focus largely on the complex interplay of biological, psychological, and social factors. Unlike training in bench science, CPC fellows must be embedded in a rich diversity of senior researchers like the one created at Indiana University Simon Cancer Center (IUSCC). During the last 10 years, we have trained interdisciplinary behavioral scientists in medicine, psychology, nursing, informatics, epidemiology, neuroscience, and music therapy who are making significant contributions to cancer research both nationally and internationally. The purpose of this training program is to: 1) Train interdisciplinary pre and post-doctoral fellows with the requisite knowledge and skills to become successful independent investigators in the field of behavioral oncology, 2) Develop a cadre of senior interdisciplinary researchers who serve as mentors for our trainees through an interdisciplinary research network at IUSCC, 3) Strengthen and implement a structured training program based on science in behavioral oncology, with new and innovative training experiences that will increase the outcome competencies of our graduates.

Mentees meet weekly with their primary mentor and monthly with their secondary mentors. Individual mentoring is supplemented by a strong curriculum built specifically for training in behavioral oncology. Structured training experiences are developed in Modules that are scheduled for three-hours each week lead by the Program Director. Additional research experiences include weekly review and writing sessions, and lectures from outstanding faculty. A key component of training for all fellows is writing and critiquing grant applications and publications. Predoctoral fellows are allowed a maximum of 3 years of support and post-doctoral fellows 2 years of support. We plan for 4 predoctoral fellows and 6 postdoctoral fellows.

New and innovative additions to the program include: 1) the intersection of aging and cancer, 2) embedded experiences in a basic and clinical laboratory, 3) formal proposal development as an outcome of the traineeship, 4) formal proposal development as an outcome of the traineeship, 5) experience in abstract submission and presentation, and 6) focused content on career planning.