

Radiation Therapy Oncology Group (RTOG) Translational Research Program (TRP) Request for Applications

This RFA invites applications to conduct translational research using material obtained from prospective clinical trials conducted by the Radiation Therapy Oncology Group (RTOG), a National Cancer Institute (NCI) funded cooperative group (www.rtog.org). This RFA is offered by the RTOG Translational Research Program (TRP).

Eligible organizations include domestic for-profit or non-profit organizations, public or private institutions (e.g., universities, colleges, hospitals), units of state and local governments, and eligible agencies of the federal government. Foreign institutions are also eligible to apply. Eligible principal investigators include any individual with the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to carry out the proposed research. Individuals from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups as well as individuals with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

Background

The RTOG was initially organized in 1968 as a national clinical cooperative group for the purpose of conducting radiation therapy research and cooperative clinical investigations. Funding from the NCI began in 1971.

Since its inception the Group has activated 300 protocols and accrued a total of about 60,000 patients to cooperative group studies.

Under the leadership of Walter J. Curran, Jr., MD, the RTOG provides an infrastructure for clinical investigators from the United States, Canada and outside North America to seek more effective treatments for cancer. Radiation, surgical and medical oncologists, pathologists, laboratory scientists, diagnostic imaging specialists, and experts in outcomes and quality of life research seek to expand knowledge of the basic biology and clinical manifestations of cancer, and thereby find means to increase survival, decrease morbidity, and relieve symptoms among those afflicted.

Clinical trials pursued by the RTOG a decade ago, have resulted in treatments that are considered standard today. Currently, the RTOG is striving to identify improved treatment therapies which can be transferred to the community as the standards for the 21st century. This transfer is facilitated by the interaction of clinicians and laboratory scientists from

academic medical centers with postgraduate training programs and oncologists in the private practice of medicine. In addition to the transfer of improved treatment strategies to the general medical community, an important sidelight of this interaction is a common understanding of the quality assurance practices required to achieve these new standards.

RTOG Objectives

1. Improve the survival of patients with malignant diseases in which control of the local-regional tumor is a major determinant of outcome;
2. Evaluate the contributions of new modalities to the therapy of cancer, adjunctive to the established modalities of radiation therapy, surgical resection, and chemotherapy;
3. Improve the quality of life of patients by preserving structure and function while maintaining or increasing survival, and providing palliation and preserving dignity for patients who are not cured;
4. Prevent second and subsequent malignant tumors among patients cured of cancer; and
5. Employ translational research strategies to identify patient subgroups at greatest risk for therapeutic failure with existing strategies and to identify new treatment approaches for these patients.

Translational Research Program Research Areas

Areas of research and development by the RTOG include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Correlate laboratory findings with treatment outcomes.
- Develop a better understanding the fundamental nature of malignant processes.
- Predict responsiveness of tumors to radiation therapy, hormone therapy, cytotoxic chemotherapy, and targeted therapies using theories developed through preclinical and basic research.
- Predict and prevent the development of second malignant tumors.
- Predict and prevent adverse effects of treatment.

Unique tissue resources from clinical trials conducted by the RTOG (paraffin blocks, tissue microarrays, serum, and urine) combined with longitudinal outcome data (response and toxicity) offer researchers unique translational opportunities.

The Translational Research Program (TRP) of the RTOG is requesting proposals to study tissue associated with completed clinical trials. Details regarding the clinical trial and the types of tissue available can be

viewed on the RTOG TRP Web page at:
<http://www.rtog.org/tissuebank/main.html>.

Evaluation of Applications and Review Criteria

The RTOG Group Chair will appoint members to the Translational Scientific Review Committee. The review committee will consider the following criteria:

1. Extent to which the proposed study addresses an important translational problem;
2. Degree to which the studies will impact the understanding and treatment of malignancies;
3. Whether the studies are designed appropriately to provide answers to the research questions posed;
4. Originality and level of innovation;
5. Research credentials of the investigative group; and
6. Contribution of the institutional environment to the probability of success of the proposed studies.

The review committee will consider each application independently. Each application will be rated using a priority scoring system. The results of the ratings will inform the development of a short list of finalists. Written reviews will be prepared by review committee members for each finalist, and the selection shall be made via conference call discussion by the committee

An application and the criteria for evaluation can be on the RTOG TRP Web page at: <http://www.rtog.org/tissuebank/main.html>. For those applications considered outstanding, limited funding may be available.

For additional questions please contact:

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