



Interview with prof. Ghassan K. Abou-Alfa: gallbladder interview — a lone forgotten disease under the microscope

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Editor's note

As an emerging journal in the field of clinical oncology, *Chinese Clinical Oncology* (CCO) has published a number of special series in recent years, receiving overwhelming responses from academic readers around the world. Our success cannot be achieved without the contribution of distinguished guest editors. Taking this opportunity, this year CCO launched a new series, “Interviews with Outstanding Guest Editors”, to highlight our active contributors. We hope to express our heartfelt gratitude for their tremendous effort and to further uncover the stories behind the special series.

The special series “Gallbladder Cancer” (1) led by Prof. Ghassan K. Abou-Alfa (*Figure 1*) from Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center has attracted countless readers since its release. This series presented in-depth discussion and analysis of data on gallbladder cancer and shared a very global perspective and series of insights on this disease, which provide for better understanding and evolving surgical, interventional, and systemic therapies for gallbladder cancer. Hereby, we are honored to have an interview with Prof. Abou-Alfa to share his experience in his scientific career and his insights on this special series.

Expert introduction

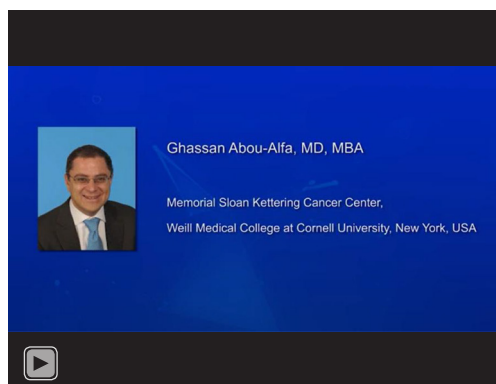
Prof. Ghassan K. Abou-Alfa specializes in hepatobiliary cancers as a Member of Memorial Sloan Kettering and a Professor of Medicine in Joan & Sanford I. Weill Medical College of Cornell University. He received his MD degree in American University of Beirut and served on the faculty of the Department of Medicine in Yale University School

of Medicine before he joined Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and Joan & Sanford I. Weill Medical College at Cornell University in 2001. Prof. Abou-Alfa also received his MBA from Columbia University in 2016.

Prof. Abou-Alfa's research is dedicated to finding novel therapies and improving the effectiveness current therapies for hepatocellular carcinoma, cholangiocarcinoma, gallbladder cancer, and fibrolamellar carcinoma, while continuing to understand the basic mechanisms of the disease and its therapies. Prof. Abou-Alfa has many publications in the field. He led on many occasions, international teams of investigators, and published the first report on the effective role of the novel agent sorafenib in the treatment of primary liver cancer. He maintained a robust translational and clinical development program including different investigated agents that he helped lead to Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval including cabozantinib, durvalumab plus tremelimumab in the treatment of hepatocellular carcinoma, and pemigatinib, infigratinib, and ivosidenib in cholangiocarcinoma. Prof. Abou-Alfa is the immediate past-Chair of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) Task Force for Hepatobiliary Cancers, and still serves on the steering committee of the AIDS Malignancy Consortium of the NCI. Prof. Abou-Alfa also serves in the steering committee of the International Affairs Committee of the American Society of Medical Oncology (ASCO), and sits on the Asia Pacific Primary Liver Cancer Expert Association (APPLE) Governing Board Council. Prof. Abou-Alfa chairs the hepatocellular carcinoma subgroup of the Alliance cooperative group. Prof. Abou-Alfa serves as the chair the medical/scientific board of the Blue Faery Liver Foundation, and also serves on the



Figure 1 Prof. Ghassan K. Abou-Alfa.



Video 1 Interview with Prof. Ghassan K. Abou-Alfa.

National Medical Advisory Committee of the American Liver Foundation. Prof. Abou-Alfa who has lectured worldwide on the subject on gastrointestinal malignancies, is also a strong advocate for raising awareness and support for improving the outcome of patients with these diseases, and enhancing oncologic education worldwide.

Interview questions

- (I) As we know that your research is dedicated to exploring novel therapies and improving the effectiveness of current therapies for hepatocellular carcinoma, cholangiocarcinoma, and gallbladder cancer, what drove you to focus on these areas?
- (II) As you mentioned in the editorial of the special series

Abou-Alfa and Luo. Interview with prof. Ghassan K. Abou-Alfa

that we have an obligation to better understand and treat gallbladder cancer despite its relative rarity (2), why do you think so and how to raise awareness for gallbladder cancer?

- (III) It seems that there is a geographical difference in the prevalence of gallbladder cancer. What do you think are the reasons for this?
- (IV) As many patients with gallbladder cancer usually have nonspecific symptoms and some have symptoms which are similar to those of advanced primary liver cancer, how to distinguish them?
- (V) For patients with advanced gallbladder cancer who are unable to receive surgery, what could doctors do to improve their survival?
- (VI) What kind of projects are you recently working on? How is the topic of this special series associated with some of them?
- (VII) If there is a chance to update this special series, what would you like to moderate, add or emphasize more?

For more details about this interview, readers can refer to *Video 1*.

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Footnote

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Ethical Statement: The authors are accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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