

Conquer Cancer - Walther Cancer Foundation Career Development Award in Palliative and Supportive Care in Oncology

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Supported By: Walther Cancer Foundation



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“Combating Cancer-Related Fatigue for Patients with Indolent Lymphoma: An Integrated Supportive Care Program”

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Layperson Summary

This research project aims to better understand and address a major concern faced by lymphoma patients: fatigue. Fatigue in these patients isn't just ordinary tiredness; it's a persistent feeling of being worn out that doesn't go away with rest. This type of fatigue can severely impact a person's quality of life, affecting their ability to work, interact with loved ones, or even perform daily tasks. Lymphoma, a type of cancer affecting the lymph nodes and blood, can bring about various challenges for patients. Even those who don't undergo treatment for lymphoma often experience fatigue. For many, this fatigue can linger on even after successful treatment. Currently, there isn't a one-size-fits-all solution for addressing this issue, and that's

where our project steps in. Our aim is to create supportive care interventions, which are specialized programs to help patients manage and possibly reduce their fatigue. To ensure these programs are effective and tailored to the needs of lymphoma patients, we're adopting a unique, iterative approach. This means we'll be working in cycles. In each cycle, we'll introduce a group of patients to the intervention, gather their feedback, and refine the program based on their experiences and insights. We'll repeat this process with several small groups of patients to ensure our program is as effective as possible. But we're not stopping there. Apart from introducing patients to the intervention, we'll be measuring its effectiveness through various tools. For example, we'll use standard scales to measure the level of fatigue and physical functioning before and after the intervention. Through such measures, we can quantify the benefits of our program. While our immediate goal is to refine and perfect the intervention for lymphoma patients, we're optimistic about the broader potential of this project. If successful, our approach could serve as a model for addressing fatigue in patients with other types of cancers. In the future, we aim to compare our specialized program against the usual care methods to ensure we're providing the best support possible for these patients. Our hope is that through this project, we can enhance the quality of life for many who face the draining effects of cancer-related fatigue.

Biography

Dr. Jensen is an academic hematologist with a dedicated focus on improving supportive care for older adults with hematologic malignancies. Specializing in chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) and lymphoma, his clinical and research efforts are geared toward the integration of supportive care into clinical practice and the development of innovative patient-centered outcome measures. At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Dr. Jensen explores the effectiveness of supportive care models and their implementation in clinical settings to meet the complex needs of cancer patients. His research aims to bridge the gap between conventional clinical care and the supportive needs of older adults, ensuring a comprehensive care approach that addresses both medical and quality-of-life concerns. Dr. Jensen is also deeply involved in evaluating and advocating for the use of patient-reported outcome measures (PROMs) in both clinical trials and everyday practice. He believes these measures are crucial for understanding the patient experience and improving the care delivered to individuals with cancer, driving his research towards actionable insights that can inform treatment decisions and policy.

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