

UI UROLOGY'S MULTISPECIALTY TUMOR BOARD: A UNIQUE MODEL



Tumor Board members at May meeting

At UI Health, cases of cancer — especially those requiring integration of medical and surgical expertise and treatment and/or multiple types of surgery — are best managed through a multidisciplinary team approach.

But managing these teams and the experts who comprise them, though a well-accepted model, can be difficult to implement, some studies have found. A unique form of collaboration, in addition to a diverse team of specialists, tends to produce the best results.

That's why the multispecialty tumor board model UI Urology and UI Health employ for GU cancers is unique, said Michael Abern, M.D., assistant professor and director of urologic oncology. Dr. Abern started the tumor board in 2013 in order to bring together medical, surgical, and other experts on a weekly basis to manage the most complex cancer cases — including those involving collaboration with other surgeons, including transplant surgeons — the board develops “consensus recommendations” for each patient's case, said Daniel Moreira, M.D., assistant professor of urology.

The board includes urologic cancer surgeons Dr. Moreira and Michael Abern, M.D., oncologists, radiation oncologists, pathologists, radiologists, clinical trials experts, researchers, nuclear medicine staff, patient navigators, social workers, and other professionals as needed (see accompanying photo). The goal, Dr. Moreira noted, is to “review all cases and make a plan, review diagnostics and treatment options, assess

whether a clinical trial might be of benefit to a particular case, then develop the consensus plan for the case going forward.”

The tumor board's track record recently was rewarded with full accreditation by the American College of Surgeons' Commission on Cancer, reaffirming the board's status as a top program.

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“In some cases, we discuss how a patient's case affects not only the individual but his or her familial risks, Dr. Moreira said. “Patients are referred to our UI Cancer Center genetic counselors to provide testing and screening recommendations for the patient's family members. In addition, recently, the GU tumor board has welcomed our molecular pathology staff, who can make recommendations for genetic sequencing of individual tumors to guide precision medicine approaches,” he said. The tumor board model offers both patients and clinicians great benefits, Dr. Moreira added.

“We have the luxury of partnering multiple surgeons and physicians, when necessary, on the same case, which is typically quite difficult to coordinate. It produces results for patients and their families — regardless of the severity of the case.”