



Advancing Neuroendocrine Cancer Research: Clinical Trials, Patient Involvement, and International Collaboration: A Discussion with Dr. Jennifer Chan and Dr. Del Rivero at the 2025 INCA Summit

Dr. Jennifer Chan 00:01

Hi. My name is Jennifer Chan. I'm a medical oncologist at Dana Farber Cancer Institute in Boston, Massachusetts in the US.

Dr. Jaydira Del Rivero 00:09

My name is Jaydira Del Rivero. I am a medical oncologist at the National Cancer Institute of the National Institute of Health.

Dr. Jennifer Chan 00:15

And so, we're both here in Sofia Bulgaria for the patient summit, for the International Neuroendocrine Cancer Alliance. And Jaydi, I know that you've been quite involved with INCA for a number of years. Tell me about your work with INCA.

Dr. Jaydira Del Rivero 00:28

Well, I'm currently a part of the research committee with INCA and the plan or one of the ideas of being part of the research committee is to also understand the needs of patients with neuroendocrine tumors. Also understand how patients can be involved in research and also be able to be involved in clinical trials, as well as be able to help define [for] investigators what is the important in terms of research and be able to develop endpoints that help us understand more about not only how neuroendocrine tumors behave, but also be able to develop treatments, or better treatments, for neuroendocrine tumors.

Dr. Jennifer Chan 01:14

Yeah, so it sounds like research is, as we both know, so important in advancing care for patients. And you know, research comes in so many different forms. Can you explain to our audience the different types of research?

Dr. Jaydira Del Rivero 01:26

Yes. What I do right now at the National Cancer Institute, the research that I do is part translational and part clinical. When I say **translational**, meaning that I work very closely with scientists that works in the lab. And one of the research projects that I work on is to be able to develop models for neuroendocrine tumors, because that's kind of like one of the areas where there is a need to be able to develop better models. And at the same time, with models we should be able to also understand the biology of the neuroendocrine tumors but also be able to develop better therapies.

The other aspects that I'm involved in is to be able to understand the molecular underpinnings of neuroendocrine tumors and be able to develop prognostic as well as predictive biomarkers. So, if there's any biomarkers to help us understand patients that will live longer and also be able to understand if there is any biomarkers that help us understand what therapies works on patients.

And the other aspect is to be able to understand all of that and take it to the clinic in the form of a **clinical trial**, and at that, and be able also to, you know, have, you know, better therapies for neuroendocrine tumors. That's our goal.

Dr. Jennifer Chan 02:51

Yeah. So definitely a lot of different types of work going on to understand the cancer and then translate it, as you said, into clinic. Can you explain a little bit more about what clinical trials are and why it's important for patients to be involved in the work that's being done?

Dr. Jaydira Del Rivero 03:05

Yeah, clinical trials encompass different aspects. Sometimes, when we say about clinical trials, we will think it is a treatment study. But that's not necessarily the case because we also have **natural history study**. That's also a clinical trial. Natural history study helps us understand what neuroendocrine tumors are, how the neuroendocrine tumors behave, what will be better ways of diagnosis. That's a goal of natural history studies. It's a **longitudinal** study, and by having a longitudinal study, it also helps us better categorize patients with neuroendocrine tumors and different cancers. And by doing that, not only help us understand more about the molecular findings of neuroendocrine tumors, but by doing that, it can also help us understand what other therapies will be out there and better discovery of therapies as well. That's part of, that's why natural history studies are very important for any cancer type. So that's also a clinical study.

There is also **prevention studies** too. That is a clinical study as well. If there is any preventive measurements for cancer, but also for neuroendocrine tumors. And the other aspects of clinical trials is **treatment studies**. And treatment studies also there's different **phases** of clinical trials or treatment studies. And the idea is also to understand what treatments works better for patients.

So clinical trials overall, it helps us understand more about how to better treat patients, how to better diagnose patients, and in that way, be able to help and prolong life for patients, but also understand how we can improve the quality of life.

Dr. Jennifer Chan 04:43

Yeah, such important work. And I think, as you mentioned, patients are such an important part of the work that we do, kind of driving the questions that we should be asking, the outcomes we should be aiming to look for, and being part of these really important studies. So, thanks for explaining the work that you do. And thanks for doing everything you're doing for the whole community.

Dr. Jaydira Del Rivero 05:02

Thank you and thank you as well for everything that you do as well for the patient community. You know.

And also, I would like to mention that the **CABINET** study that you led, it has been an important study, and the fact that it's available for patients with different type of neuroendocrine tumors is a step forward to the right direction. So, thank you for setting that example for all of us.

Dr. Jennifer Chan 05:24

Oh, thank you, and thank you for all you're doing.

Dr. Jaydira Del Rivero 05:27

Thank you.