

Zoom On: Dr. Amy Abernethy



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Amy Abernethy, MD, PhD is an oncologist, researcher and Associate Professor at Duke University Schools of Medicine and Nursing. She works as the Medical Director - Oncology Quality, Outcomes and Patient Centred Care, Duke University Health System. In addition to a long list of professional titles and associations, Dr. Abernethy is one of the biggest advocates of using a health information technology approach to find answers.

Answers in the Data

It is Dr. Abernethy's mission to solve the unsolvable and she firmly believes that the answer to unlocking solutions for cancer treatment resides in the data. She feels that it is all about organising the data and structuring it in a way that it can be used for problem-solving activities.

"In the statistical world, we say that getting your data set right is 90 percent of the task, and everything else is now doing the analyses, which you've already planned out once you've gotten your data set right. And, this is getting the data set right at scale."

Duke Cancer Care Research Program

Dr. Abernethy is actively involved in the Duke Cancer Care Research Program (DCCRP) that handles all aspects of high-quality clinical trials that generate evidence-based solutions for problems in supportive oncology. The goal of the research program is to investigate novel agents and approaches for the alleviation of common cancer-related symptoms as well as discover new health service delivery models in order to optimise patient health and quality of life.

Dr. Abernethy's primary areas of clinical interest include melanoma, cancer pain management, symptom control, supportive oncology, general haematology-oncology and palliative medicine. She co-directs both the Duke Quality Care Initiative and the Duke Integrative Oncology Program. She holds affiliations with the Duke Clinical Research Institute, Duke Comprehensive Cancer Center Care Control Program and Duke Center for Clinical Health Policy Research.

She is an Associate Professor with Tenure, Division of Medical Oncology, Department of Medicine, and Duke University Medical Center. She is also the Associate Director - Information Technology and Acting Program Leader - Cancer Control Program, Duke Comprehensive Cancer Center. Dr. Abernethy is an adjunct Associate Lecturer at Flinders University, South Australia.

Professional Appointments

Dr. Abernethy is also an appointee to the Institute of Medicine's National Cancer Policy Forum, President-Elect of the American Academy of Hospice & Palliative Medicine, on the Advisory Board for the Rapid Learning System for Cancer of the American Society of Clinical Oncology, Co-Chair for the PRO Core of the NIH funded Collaboratory and Co-Principal Investigator of a NIH-funded faculty development program in comparative effectiveness research at Duke.

Dr. Abernethy is an active participant on high-level national and international discussions about reforming the evidence development system, presenting a model for a rapid learning clinic committed to better serving patient needs in an evidence-driven, patient-centred and cost-effective manner.

An internationally recognised expert in the research and delivery of patient-centred cancer care, Dr. Abernethy has over 300 publications.

Sources: Healthcareitnews.com, TEDMED.com, Duke University School of Medicine, Duke Cancer Care Research Program

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