

It's Just Unjust

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Benefiting cancer research and social justice

It is with much excitement that we launch the inaugural issue of *Cancer InCytes*, a magazine that promotes the advancement of cancer research, while also benefiting the cause of social justice. It is an odd combination—we know—but upon closer inspection the loss of a loved one to cancer instills the same sense of injustice that one would feel when faced with human trafficking for the purposes of sexual or manual labor. Just as the cure for cancer requires a collective effort within society, the cure for social injustice requires a collective awareness that will lead to concrete action. We hope that this magazine will be a venue where humanity is lifted up as something worth fighting for, even against seemingly insurmountable complexities such as cancer and slavery.

The combination of longer lifespans and exposure to human-made environmental carcinogens has brought cancer to the forefront of biomedical research. Though cancer research has made much advancement over the past few decades with

the advent of new technologies and discoveries, there is still much that is unknown. The heterogeneity of cancer cell types within a tumor, and the organism's response to this abnormality, makes cancer a formidable challenge. The complexity of cancer is akin to the fictional computer villain from Hollywood's *Terminator* movies, otherwise known as SkyNet. Though cancer is not “self-aware” in the sense that SkyNet evolved to become, we know that the heterogeneity of cancer allows it to adjust against our best efforts. Much work remains to be done to combat this monstrosity.

Human civilization has progressed beyond its primitive beginnings but still suffers from many of the same shortcomings that plagued its past. In this sense, cancer and SkyNet are corruptions of once magnificent systems. Though the British statesmen William Wilberforce heroically ended the slave trade and the institution of slavery in the British Empire 200 years ago, there are more slaves today than at any time in the history of the world. The heterogeneity of cancer is analogous to the socio-

economic complexities that fuel the monstrosity of human slavery. Tackling social injustice is as difficult as the effort to cure cancer, but it is a struggle that is well worth it—for the sake of who we are; of who we demand to be.

Cancer and slavery, both injustices in their own right, are insults upon the dignity of humanity. Just ask a cancer survivor and their loved ones, or a victim of human trafficking and their loved ones. Thus, in addition to discussing insights into cancer research, each issue of *Cancer InCytes* will also present perspectives from social justice advocates, victims, and those of cancer survivors. We hope that you will join with us in supporting the fight against both monstrosities. The magnificence can be redeemed.

Sincerely,



David H. Nguyen, Ph.D.

Editor in Chief, *Cancer InCytes*