



NANOTECHNOLOGY IN CANCER

Edited by
Anshu B. Mathur

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Nanotechnology in Cancer

Edited by

Anshu B. Mathur

*The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center,
Houston, TX, United States*



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Contributors

C.L. Altan

Yeditepe University, Istanbul, Turkey

B. Blumenauer

The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX, United States

S. Bucak

Yeditepe University, Istanbul, Turkey

C.E. Butler

The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX, United States

M. Caffo

University of Messina, Messina, Italy

G. Caruso

University of Messina, Messina, Italy

M.W. Clemens

The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX, United States

S.J. Corr

Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX, United States; Rice University, Houston, TX, United States; University of Houston, Houston, TX, United States

S.L. Craig

Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston, SC, United States

S.A. Curley

Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX, United States; Rice University, Houston, TX, United States

S.F. De Lacey

Kids Development Foundation, London, United Kingdom; University of Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland

L.W. Dunne

The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX, United States

J.R. Hubenak

The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX, United States

T.S. Iyyanki

The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX, United States

V.B. Jensen

The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX, United States

R. Jeyaraj

University College London (UCL), London, United Kingdom

A.B. Mathur

The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX, United States

L. Merlo

University of Messina, Messina, Italy

D. Mishra

The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX, United States

D. Srinivasa

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, United States

A. Tan

University College London (UCL), London, United Kingdom; Stanford University, Stanford, CA, United States; Kids Development Foundation, London, United Kingdom

Q. Zhang

The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX, United States

About the Authors

Cem L. Altan, PhD

Cem Levent Altan received his PhD in Chemical Engineering from Yeditepe University (Turkey) and Eindhoven University of Technology (Netherlands). Currently, he is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Chemical Engineering at Yeditepe University in Istanbul. His research focuses on synthesis and control over the formation of magnetite nanoparticles, magnetic hyperthermia, and thermophysical properties of magnetic nanofluids.

Brian Blumenauer

Brian Blumenauer is a third-year general surgery resident at the University of Texas Medical School in Houston. Upon completion of his general surgery residency, Dr. Blumenauer will look to obtain a fellowship position in the field of plastic and reconstructive surgery.

Mark W. Clemens, MD, FACS

Mark W. Clemens is in the Plastic Surgery faculty of MD Anderson Cancer Center, University of Texas in Houston. He completed plastic surgical training at Georgetown University, research training programs at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Harvard Children's Hospital, and received a microvascular reconstructive surgery fellowship at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.

He has lectured internationally and written more than 50 peer-reviewed articles and 30 book chapters. He serves on study section of the Plastic Surgery Foundation (PSF), the editorial board of the *Aesthetic Surgery Journal*, and is a board member for the Aesthetic Surgery Education Research Foundation (ASERF). He was a member of the surgical team that performed the world's first skull and scalp transplantation. His research interests include robotic, microvascular, and prosthetic reconstructive surgery of the breast. He is the MD Anderson site principal investigator for the NIH R01-funded Mastectomy Reconstruction Outcomes Consortium (MROC) Study. He leads a multidisciplinary research team and tissue repository focused on the study of breast implant-associated anaplastic large-cell lymphoma (BI-ALCL). He serves as an American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) society liaison to the US Food and Drug Administration, and chairs a subcommittee for ASPS overseeing national research and education efforts for BI-ALCL.

Charles E. Butler, MD, FACS

Dr. Charles E. Butler is Chairman and Professor in the Department of Plastic Surgery at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. Dr. Butler is board certified in both general and plastic surgery. He is a well-recognized expert in reconstructive surgery, particularly in complex reconstruction and microsurgery

with over 300 publications and 700 invited national and international presentations, instructional courses, and lectures. He has clinical and research interest and expertise in torso reconstruction, including the abdominal wall, breast, chest wall, pelvis, and spine. He is an active clinical and basic science researcher and mentor. Dr. Butler is an international expert in complex torso reconstruction, microsurgery, flap, component separation, implantable biologic matrices, and tissue engineered constructs.

Seyda Bucak

Seyda Bucak received her PhD in Chemistry from University of East Anglia, UK, started working on magnetic nanoparticles during her postdoctoral research at MIT. Since then, her work is predominantly on the synthesis, characterization, and applications of magnetic nanoparticles in biomedical field and material science. She has been working at the Department of Chemical Engineering at Yeditepe University since 2004, where is currently a full-time Professor and head of department.

Maria Caffo, MD

Dr. Maria Caffo (University of Messina, School Medicine, 1994) is currently Assistant Professor in Neurosurgery at Department of Neurosurgery, University of Messina, Italy. She has been a Member of the Italian Society of Neurosurgery since 2000, a Member of the Italian Association of Neurooncology since 2000, and a Member of the European Association of Neurooncology since 2002. Dr. Caffo has a PhD in Neurooncology. She is also Professor of Physiology in the degree course of Technique of Neurophysiopathology and in the degree course of Science in Nursing, and Professor of Neurooncology in the Program Residency in Neurosurgery, Department of Neuroscience, University of Messina, Italy, and she is a reviewer for several technical journals.

Gerardo Caruso

Gerardo Caruso (University of Messina, School Medicine, 1990) is currently an Assistant Neurosurgeon, Neurosurgical Clinic, University of Messina, Italy. He has been a Member of the Italian Society of Neurosurgery since 1996 and a Member of the American Nanosociety since 2011. Dr. Caruso previously served as an officer in the Italian Navy and has also served as a reviewer for a number of international technical journals. He is author of various papers refereed on international scientific journals.

Stuart J. Corr

Dr. Stuart J. Corr is an Assistant Professor of surgery in the Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery at Baylor College of Medicine. He also holds an adjunct Assistant Professor title at Department of Bioengineering, University of Houston. He has a background in electronic-, system-, and nano-engineering, as well as

nano-mediated noninvasive radio frequency cancer hyperthermia. He is currently involved in the design and prototyping of 3D printer technologies and is Director for the Baylor College of Medicine, Department of Surgery Incubator for Surgical Innovation.

Suzanne L. Craig, DVM, DACLAM, MBA

Suzanne Craig is currently Department Chair of Comparative Medicine and Director of Laboratory Animal Resources at the Medical University of South Carolina. She has published several peer-reviewed articles and book chapters including work on nanoparticles and cancer. She is the Past-President of the American Society of Laboratory Animal Practitioners. She formerly was Deputy Department Chair at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center of the Department of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery. She has held roles as Director of the Gulf Coast Consortium for the training of veterinary residents in comparative medicine for which she received an NIH grant, Director of Education, Chief IACUC Veterinarian, Section Chief, and other positions. She has been an invited speaker both nationally and internationally.

Steven A. Curley, MD, FACS

Dr. Steven A. Curley is Professor of Surgery and Chief of Surgical Oncology at Baylor College of Medicine. He is also an adjunct Professor in Department of Mechanical Engineering and Materials Science at Rice University. He leads a translational research laboratory at Baylor College of Medicine and has been involved with the development and design of several FDA-approved medical devices. His work currently focuses on the clinical translation of noninvasive radio frequency cancer hyperthermia therapy.

Sherrie F. De Lacey

Sherrie F. De Lacey is a doctoral student, currently studying PhD in International Business at the University of Zurich, Switzerland. She previously worked in the City of London as an analyst, developing proprietary trading algorithms, helping to raise money and broker deals. She has now founded Ranait Fleur and often volunteers with children; being very well traveled having lived on four continents mostly led by her passion for safeguarding children, Sherrie is CFO at Kids Development Foundation.

Lina W. Dunne

Lina W. Dunne is based at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Department of Plastic Surgery, Houston, TX, United States.

Justin R. Hubenak

Justin R. Hubenak is based at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX, United States.

Tejaswi Sriranga Iyyanki

Tejaswi Sriranga Iyyanki is a graduate research assistant and a third-year PhD–MBA student at Penn State College of medicine in the biomedical sciences program. His current research interests include genomics, epigenomics, cancer, stem cells, big-data biology, and next-generation sequencing technologies. He previously worked at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center as a research assistant in plastic surgery.

V. Behrana Jensen, DVM, DACLAM

Vanessa Jensen is an Associate Professor and Section Chief in the Department of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. She is a Diplomate of the American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine. She received her doctorate in Veterinary Medicine from Iowa State University and was a Post-Doctoral Research Associate in the Department of Immunology and Microbiology at The University of Iowa. She has been involved with publications in various fields of research involving laboratory animals.

Rebecca Jeyaraj, MBBS

Rebecca Jeyaraj is an MBBS medical student at University College London (UCL), currently in her clinical years. She obtained her integrated BSc in Clinical Sciences from UCL, graduating with First Class Honours, and was also awarded the Faculty of Medical Sciences Medal. Her research interests center around the application of nanoscience to clinical and surgical medicine.

Anshu B. Mathur, PhD

Anshu B. Mathur holds a position as a tenured Associate Professor in the Department of Plastic Surgery at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas, United States. She also serves as the Director of Research in the Department of Plastic Surgery for the Tissue Regeneration and Molecular Cell Engineering Labs (TRAMCEL). The TRAMCEL provide a unique interdisciplinary clinically translatable research environment, opportunities, and platform for training of engineering and surgery research trainees to go from nanoscale to clinic. We have cultivated expertise in micro/nano technologies and devices as they are applied to the fabrication of biomaterials and therapeutic delivery vehicles with applications in the fields of nanomedicine and regenerative medicine.

She received her doctorate degree in Biomedical Engineering from Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, United States, before joining the MD Anderson Cancer Center faculty as a tenure-track Assistant Professor in 2003. She also holds two Bachelor of Science degrees with honors and one Master of Science degree from North Carolina State University, Raleigh, North Carolina, United States, and another Master of Science degree from Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, United States.

Lucia Merlo

Lucia Merlo (University of Messina, School of Medicine, 2001) is a Neurosurgeon. She has been a Member of the European Association of Neurosurgical Societies since 2010. She is interested in Neurooncology, Pediatrics, and Functional Neurosurgery.

Deepa Mishra

Deepa Mishra is based at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX, United States.

Dhivya Srinivasa

Diplomate, American Board of Surgery. Surgical Internship, University of California, San Francisco 2010–11, General Surgery Residency at University of Texas, Houston 2011–15, and Plastic Surgery Resident, University of Michigan 2015 to current.

Aaron Tan, MBBS

Aaron Tan is an MBBS medical student at University College London (UCL), currently in his clinical years. He is concurrently a visiting scholar at the Biomaterials and Advanced Drug Delivery Laboratory (BioADD) at Stanford University. He holds two degrees from UCL, a BSc (Hons) in Surgical Sciences and a PhD in Surgery and Bioengineering. Aaron has authored in excess of 40 PubMed-indexed publications, with a total citation of 1051, and a h-index of 16.

Qixu Zhang, MD, Ph.D

Qixu Zhang is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Plastic Surgery at University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. He received medical doctorate degree and completed plastic surgery residency training at Peking Union Medical College in China. Dr. Zhang completed his postdoctoral fellowship at UTMB and MDACC in Houston. He is an active member of PSRC, WHS, SFB, TERMIS, and SPRBM. His research focuses on the large-scale composite soft tissue engineering using natural platform and adult stem cells for reconstructive surgery. His work has been published in high impact journals in the field including *Biomaterials*, *Acta biomaterialia*, *JID*.

Foreword

Application of nanotechnology in cancer is the forefront of nanomedicine that can improve quality of life of the patients suffering from disease, disability, and disfigurement. Nanotechnology can be applied to target diverse areas afflicted by cancer such as invasive and metastatic diseases, aesthetic plastic surgery, and therapeutic delivery via catheters and stent coatings.

Nanotechnology can generate various structures and shapes with programmable properties resulting in specificity of function. While research has heavily focused on carbon and gold nanoparticles, nanotubes, and other combination structures, the size of the structures defines it as nano in the range of 1–100 nm as per definition of the National Institutes of Health (<https://www.nih.gov/research-training/nanotechnology-nih>), Bethesda, Maryland, USA.

This edition of the book written from a major cancer center, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas, USA, has attempted to cover the entire range of ongoing work in Nanotechnology. A major area that my group has written about in the past is Imaging Nanotechnology and that is not covered at length in this book.

Cancer is treated as compromised wound bed with issues such as heterogeneous vasculature, genetic malformations, cellular diversity, microbe infiltration, and other issues that affect its growth and preservation in the human body. Although cancer bed is a challenging environment to begin with the invasive and metastatic diseases make it impossible to treat.

The targeting of the nanotechnology-based therapeutics is multifaceted and can be customized with the specificity of the therapeutic. Further customization by surface modification techniques allows receptor–ligand specificities toward a tumor bed. Free energy of molecules in that regime is affected by entropy, disorder. The targeted therapeutic area is loaded with biological sources and synthetic molecules. Specifically, therapeutic industry such as the nutraceuticals has roots in Ayurveda medicine. Combination targeting with factors considered from ancient Ayurveda and free energy targeting by surface modifications has implications in cancer treatment.

The existence of cancer has deep roots in medicine and the complexity of the tumor and treatment may be tied together. Similar to gene therapy in the past, nanotechnology is considered a forefront of medicine targeting molecular regimes that are unexplored but challenging. Considering the factors affecting tumor treatment using nanotechnology, the science and its translation is controversial similar to gene therapy. The failure rates could be considerable if the complex molecular nature is not identified.

Anshu B. Mathur

*The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center,
Houston, TX, United States*

Preface

I dedicate this book to my children, Roshan, Aarushi, Devan, and the one who didn't make it.

I have been working in the area of Nanotechnology applications in cancer since my appointment at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center as a tenure-track Assistant Professor in 2003. While the cancer center is rich in knowledge about cancers, I was able to collaborate with therapeutic researchers and offer my expertise as a Biomedical Engineer and build molecules such as silk fibroin-coated liposomal emodin and nanocurcumin. We have been conducting studies to assess absorption of the nanocurcumin in an in vivo rat tumor model and will continue collaborations with MD Anderson clinical and basic science collaborators. The advantages of this nanoparticle approach for clinical health applications are tremendous, such as ease of manufacturing, versatility toward any therapeutic, high efficacy against diseased cells, biodegradability, no toxic byproducts, and biodisposability.

The first edition of this book focuses on nanotechnology in cancer and has further impact in regenerative medicine with respect to complete cancer care. Combination of nanotechnology with cell and tissue engineering is the forefront in regenerative nanomedicine that can help understand disease at the nanoscale leading to novel therapy modalities and improve quality of life in cancer patients. I have cultivated multiphase strategies to address the restoration of functional tissues in cancer patients with critical size defects, by focusing my research on the development of nanoengineered regenerative biomaterials and targeted nanotherapeutics for regulated local repair. The ultimate goal of my research group is to engineer regenerative, cell-responsive, and therapeutic three-dimensional nanostructured biomaterial matrices that would recruit, guide, and renew cells at the repair site by surrendering control of the regenerative process to the cells, which regulate the process at the cell-matrix nanointerface (<100 nm). In order for investigators in this emerging field of nanomedicine and regenerative medicine to develop complete repair strategies with high efficacy, we will first have to understand the rules at the nanoscale as they pertain to tumors and regenerative stem cells. What are the nanosignatures or the quantum molecular signatures of various cells? The quantum molecular signatures of the tumor cells that are intermixed with stem cells at a repair site can help us differentiate the "target sites" on tumor cells versus the regenerating stem cells at the same location. With the assistance of microsurgery, we can reach these "targets" in order to detect, manipulate, and guide local regeneration.

The future of nanotechnology at MD Anderson Cancer Center lies in continuing to develop collaborative efforts across the institution in order to study the regulation of cells at a molecular scale to achieve repair, reconstruction, and regeneration in cancer patients via molecularly engineered materials. I plan to lead initiatives at the national level to build this area of research and develop a

translational device platform in the area of regenerative materials and quantum-targeted nanotherapeutics.

I would like to thank my Sr. Administrative Assistant, Ms. Miquelyn Titus, and the Department of Plastic Surgery for their administrative support. The Elsevier team and the publisher have provided publishing infrastructure for me to be able to edit this book. I would also like to acknowledge my family.

This book brings together my work since 2003 at UT MD Anderson Cancer Center and I hope that the community can grasp how the two independent areas of Nanotechnology and Cancer come together.

Anshu B. Mathur

*The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center,
Houston, TX, United States*

Introduction to Bio-Nanotechnology

The properties of cells and tissues, whether they are diseased like cancer or healthy, are a function of their interactions with each other and have to be treated as an integrated closed system. The key is to recognize that the macrotissue properties are driven by its microenvironment, which is affected at the nanoscale by an integrated cellular assembly and its mechanical interactions with the other cells and matrix components. From an engineer's perspective, the divide in knowledge between cancer and health is due to the divide between engineers/biophysicists and cancer cell biologists working independently in their own research microculture. For example, engineering methods of study in these cancer systems could get trapped in in vitro 2D monolayer experiments and new systems designed by engineers/biophysicists who probe cells at nanoscale and below with instrumentations such as surface force apparatus and atomic force microscopy or model such effects using finite element modeling at the microscale may not translate into the cancer world. The fanciest experiments are in 3D in situ live animal imaging with multiphoton second harmonic generation confocal imaging, which gives structural information and cell–cell interactions at a global tissue level. Cancer cell biologist can break the cellular pathways down to their microRNA but compromise the cohesiveness of the integrated cellular unit. The next generation of instrumentations have to be developed in collaboration between cancer cell biologist, who have the molecular knowledge of which molecules are being expressed by the cells, and engineers/biophysicists, who know how to combine the latest technologies that will allow probing of cells at the nanoscales and below in their native 3D microenvironments, such that differences between cancer and normal tissues properties can be built into a library that has quantitative information about an integrated cell–matrix assembly. For example, tumor type (breast, liver, pancreas, etc.), cell type (epithelial cell, hepatocyte, endothelial cell, etc.), Ligand X interacts with Receptor X on the cell with an adhesion strength of Y and drives actin microfilament cytoskeletal assembly to form stress fibers that may increase the stiffness Z of the cell globally, as the signal travels down to the cell–integrin interactions that leads to integrin clustering, which feeds back into the cytoskeletal stress fiber assembly and perhaps increases/decreases/balances the expression of Receptor X. If we have all of this information about integrated closed tumor systems, we can develop targeted nanotherapeutics with minimal toxicity and advance our knowledge for treatment of other diseases also.

Engineers have developed imaging technologies such as quantum dots (QDs) to overcome issues with cancer microenvironment. Although QDs have unique optical properties, such as size tunable absorption and emission at various wavelengths, improved photostability, and narrow emission peak to enable multiplexing, the toxicity associated with QDs in biological systems is a major

shortcoming that can be overcome using biological coatings. For example, the synthesis, characterization, and application of silk fibroin (SF)-coated semiconductor nanocrystals, a.k.a. QDs, in cellular systems was reported. The coating of QDs with SF provides a biological and biocompatible alternative to traditional fluorescent markers for in vitro and in vivo cellular imaging applications. The biocompatible interface provided by the SF coatings would be expected to assist in the clearance of SF-coated QDs. These features increase the potential for administration of SF-coated QDs for in vivo imaging administration for versatile disease-specific imaging needs. From a nanoparticle size perspective, it is interesting to note that SF has the molecular composition and structural features to allow it to coat particles <10 and >100 nm.

Biological nanocoatings have also been used to overcome numerous barriers to drug delivery into the tumor site. Careful considerations are required when designing a new “capsule” formulation of a drug for high efficacy at the tumor site. The success of a therapeutic/drug is dependent upon its mode of delivery and its potency at the site of tumors. At the site of a solid tumor, key issues that make the drug delivery to tumors a challenging affair are heterogeneous vascular architecture and permeability, high interstitial pressures in the necrotic core, large interstitial distance between the tissue mass and vessels, low convective transport, acidic pH, hypoxia, and lack of lymphatic drainage. In addition, due to lack of specificity of the delivery device for tumor cells, administration of high dosage of the drug causes drug resistance and toxicity to normal tissues. Thus biological nanocoatings have been developed that enhance targeting to a tumor cells, increase retention of the drug, release drug in a controlled manner, and enhance the efficacy of a drug/therapeutic. The integration of therapeutic that may have targeted specificity for a tumor type with a delivery device that does not compromise its specificity for the tumor is a critical parameter to consider.

Treatment modality to revolutionize the way cancer is treated currently is to stay with a comprehensive approach yet maximize targeting and specificity. The entire approach and its individual components are innovative in their own respect.

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