



Wednesday, March 13, 2002

## Cancer research pioneer to visit OU

Oakland University's **Center for Biomedical Research** is honoring Judah Folkman, MD, who developed the theory that cancer could be controlled by cutting off blood supplies to tumors, which has been called perhaps the most significant advance in the last 50 years in the fight against cancer.

For his revolutionary work, the Center for Biomedical Research is awarding Folkman with the OU Distinguished Biomedical Achievement Award on Thursday, March 21, when he will deliver his lecture, "Angiogenesis Research: From Laboratory to Clinic," at 4 p.m. in Room 201 of Dodge Hall.

Folkman is a Harvard professor and director of the Surgical Research Laboratory at Children's Hospital in Boston. He founded the field of angiogenesis research, which is the study of blood vessel development. His research has focused on how cancerous tumors spur the development of new blood vessels that they require for growth.

Prior to Folkman's lecture, there will be a tour of the **Center for Biomedical Research**. Anyone interested in taking the tour should meet at 2 p.m. in the conference room on the eighth floor of the Science and Engineering Building. After the lecture, there will be a reception from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

For more than 30 years, Folkman has investigated a novel way to attack cancer. Instead of conventional chemotherapy and radiation treatments, which try to directly kill cancer cells, he's sought ways to turn off supply lines to tumors. Folkman's approach is to stop the growth of tumors before they become big enough to cause harm. If new drugs called angiogenesis inhibitors can cut off blood supplies to tumors, the cancer may vanish or become dormant.

For years, Folkman's theory drew skepticism from the medical and scientific communities. In 1998, he announced his lab had developed two agents, endostatin and angiostatin, which block blood vessel growth in mouse tumors. This discovery made angiogenesis research a prominent field. Today, several angiogenesis inhibitors are in human clinical trials.

Folkman and others are exploring a wide range of uses for angiogenesis inhibitors, including those for treatment of diseases that involve abnormal blood vessel growth. Those diseases include arthritis, psoriasis, endometriosis, macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy. Angiogenesis inhibitors are particularly promising because, unlike chemotherapy, they are not toxic and are less likely to result in drug resistance.

"We feel that if and when angiogenesis inhibitors are eventually approved for use in medical practice, that they may be used together with chemotherapy, radiotherapy, immunotherapy, vaccine therapy, gene therapy or other types of novel anti-cancer approaches," Folkman says. "We do not foresee that angiogenesis inhibitors will displace other therapies but will hopefully improve them."

The lecture is sponsored by Biotherapies Inc., the College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Programs Fund, King Pharmaceuticals, William Beaumont Hospital, Vectech Pharmaceutical Consultants Inc., the Michigan Biosciences Industry Association, Oakland County Medical Society and the Wayne County Medical Society.

For more information, visit the **Center for Biomedical Research** Web site or contact the center, 205 Science and Engineering Building, at (248) 370-2085.

### SUMMARY

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