This Time I Mean It!

By the time you read this, you will have weathered another holiday season with too many parties, too much food, and yes, too much eggnog! You are maybe feeling a little disappointed with yourself for all of this overindulgence. Perhaps you are staring at the scale with a wary eye and wondering how disciplined you can be on your keto diet, not to mention your new, aggressive workout program. Oh wait; that is how I feel! Chances are you never started down that rabbit hole in the first place. Good for you!

To assuage my misery, I looked at last January's "Oncology Watch," hoping to be satisfied that I had at least kept my professional promises and followed through with last year's resolution: to become a smarter doctor. At the time, I was full of resolve to use every new drug approval as a learning opportunity and to read a major scientific review at least once a week.

I have to be honest here: I didn't even come close. Actually, I thought I had kept up with drug approvals. After all, we get hundreds of email blasts for each one. How could I avoid it? But I checked the FDA website, and of 41 approvals, 9 were for cancer drugs. And I didn't have a clue about 2 of those 9. Well, I know about them now, since I looked them up tonight. And I have to admit they are pretty interesting new compounds!

This all gets me to thinking about how difficult it must be for the average doc in practice to keep up. I work in an academic environment where I actually have designated time to think and do my homework when there is a new scientific breakthrough. And if I can't find something I'm looking for, I can simply call on a colleague to point me in the right direction.

But if you are a busy practicing oncologist, you really do have to stay on top of new drug approvals, often across many diseases. You are probably seeing patients 4 days a week, with maybe a day for paperwork or reading. From my interactions with community oncologists in the Bay Area, it's pretty clear that they do a masterful job of keeping up with new developments. Hats off to them!

As for me, I am holding the line and keeping the same resolution. Every new drug will stay on my radar, and I will master the mechanism of action, the indication, and the side effects. And I promise to read at least one in-depth review of selected topics every week. I will do it!

Thanks for hearing me out. In closing, I wish for all of you good health and much happiness in the New Year. Cheers!

MARGARET TEMPERO, MD

Margaret Tempero, MD, is a Professor of Medicine and Director of the UCSF Pancreas Center and editor-in-chief of *JNCCN*. Her research career has focused on pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma, especially in the area of investigational therapeutics. Dr. Tempero has served on the ASCO Board of Directors and as ASCO President. She currently serves on the ASCO Conquer Cancer Foundation Board. She codirected the AACR/ASCO Methods in Clinical Cancer Research and taught this course and similar courses in Europe and Australia. She was founding Chair of the NCI Clinical Oncology Study Section and served as a member and Chair of the NCI Board of Scientific Counselors Subcommittee A. She is a member of the Scientific Steering Committee and Chair of the Clinical and Translational Study Section for the Cancer Prevention & Research Institute of Texas. She is or has been on the Scientific Advisory Boards of the Lustgarten Foundation, the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network, the V Foundation, The Alberta Canada Cancer Board, and the EORTC. She served as a member of the Oncology Drug Advisory Committee for the FDA. She has served as Deputy Director and Interim Director for the UNMC Eppley Cancer Center. She is Chief Emeritus of the Division of Medical Oncology at UCSF. She served as the founding Deputy Director and was later Director of Research Programs at the UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center.

doi: 10.6004/jnccn.2020.0003

The ideas and viewpoints expressed in this editorial are those of the author and do not necessarily represent any policy, position, or program of NCCN.

WHAT DO YOU THINK? To submit a Letter to the Editor, email JNCCN@nccn.org or log into www.editorialmanager.com/JNCCN.