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Contact: Katie Koerner (kkoerner@sitcancer.org)

Ph: (414) 271-2456

**The Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer Leads Worldwide Task Force to Validate Immunoscore as a new Component for the Classification of Colon Cancer**

*As Colon Cancer Awareness Month comes to a close, SITC's initiative continues forward*

MILWAUKEE, WI -- Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States, and every year more than 140,000 Americans are diagnosed with the disease. Continuing evidence has suggested that the presence of an activated CD8+ T Cell phenotype in the tumor microenvironment may have powerful prognostic value in colon and other cancer types – a concept termed as “Immunoscore.”

Because of this, the Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer (SITC) formed a worldwide task force to lead an initiative known as the Immunoscore Project, which promotes the validity of Immunoscore for cancer classification in routine clinical settings. SITC's task force is comprised of 23 different centers in 17 different countries, and is currently working together with 5,000 cases of colon cancer specimens in a retrospective analysis in an effort to advance the implementation of the Immunoscore as a prognostic biomarker for patients with colon cancer.

Traditionally, the outcome prediction for patients with cancer is achieved by evaluating tissue samples obtained during surgical removal of the patient's primary tumor. Traditional tumor staging (AJCC/UICC-TNM classification) summarizes data on tumor burden (T), presence of cancer cells in draining and regional lymph nodes (N) and evidence for metastases (M). However, it is recognized that clinical outcome can significantly vary among patients within the same stage.

“The SITC Immunoscore task force is important because the current classification provides limited prognostic information for early stage patients,” Dr. Bernard Fox (Earle A. Chiles Research Institute) Immunoscore Steering Committee member, said.

“The importance of continued research and funding for testing the validity of the Immunoscore Project is crucial because it augments the current TNM classification and appears to identify early stage cancer patients who are at great risk for recurrence and may benefit from early intervention. It also underscores the critical role the immune system plays in protecting people from cancer, and has the ability to change the way people think about cancer treatment.”

Along with the Immunoscore Steering Committee and principal investigator, Jérôme Galon, PhD, SITC will continue to spearhead this project, and plans to present the most recent project findings at the Society's Annual Meeting held November 6-10, 2013 in National Harbor, MD.

To listen to Dr. Bernard Fox's presentation on the Immunoscore Project at the SITC 2012 Workshop, visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uS7oOGke9aM>

For more information on SITC and the Immunoscore Project visit:  
<http://www.sitcancer.org/about-sitc/initiatives/immunoscore>

Founded in 1984, the Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer (formerly the International Society for Biological Therapy of Cancer; iSBTc) is a non-profit organization of clinicians, researchers, students, post-doctoral fellows, and allied health professionals dedicated to improving cancer patient outcomes by advancing the development and application of cancer immunotherapy through interaction, innovation and leadership. For more information about SITC, please visit the Society website at [www.sitcancer.org](http://www.sitcancer.org)

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