

## **Oncology Careers: Knowing When to Make the Right Move**

The field of oncology involves a multidisciplinary team of specialist including medical oncologist, surgical oncologist, radiation oncologist, and psychology. Oncology is rapidly advancing in terms of treatment options and research but also provides the physician with the potential to form strong relationships with patients and take on leadership positions.

With performance based medicine becoming an integral part of medical practice, oncologist are faced with the decision of how to integrate best-practices, create measures of performance, and clinical performance data into the practice setting of their choice.

### **Choosing the right practice setting**

#### *Academic hospitals*

When choosing to practice oncology in a major academic setting or teaching hospital, how one spends their day can be quite variable. For example, oncologist who focus on research may divide their day between patient care, conducting research, applying for grants, preparing manuscripts, and meetings. Likewise, academic oncologist are also involved in mentoring and training and presenting at conferences locally and at outside institutions.

Another important aspect of this role is teaching. Teaching may involve bed-side teaching of medical students, residents, and fellows, lectures, and case discussions. Mentoring of medical students or leading electives may require a substantial level of commitment but can be quite fulfilling.

Finally, outside of clinical care, academic oncologist may travel to take part in expert panels and participate in community educational programs or boards.

Factors involved in graduates not choosing careers in academic settings include rising educational debt and potential income. Studies aiming to understand career trends in Hematology and Oncology graduates from academic centers have reported a rate of 40% choosing nonacademic settings. The survey also noted women, those with experience in basic research, and other graduate degrees were more likely to report an interest in academic settings. Overall, after adjusting for debt, year in training, age, sex, and published research, having a mentor was associated with academic interest.