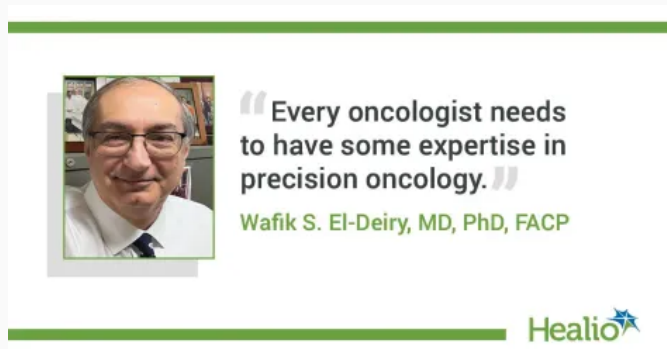


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## WIN Consortium chair aims to promote collaboration, innovation in personalized cancer medicine

Wafik S. El-Deiry, MD, PhD, FACP, has been elected chair of the Worldwide Innovative Networking (WIN) in Personalized Cancer Medicine Association — WIN Consortium.

El-Deiry — director of Legorreta Cancer Center and associate dean of oncologic sciences at Warren Alpert Medical School at Brown University — began his term as WIN Consortium chair in December.



The France-based nonprofit association’s member organizations include 28 academic medical centers, industry groups, research organizations and patient advocates from 19 countries on five continents.

The collaborative organization aims to extend survival and improve quality of life for people with cancer through use of genetically and epigenetically informed health care and accelerating the discovery and development of personalized cancer therapies.

“The WIN Consortium isn’t about recruiting a new chair who talks about all their great ideas. This isn’t about me,” El-Deiry, who serves as associate editor for molecular oncology for Healio | HemOnc Today, said in an interview. “This is about growing the global membership, bringing in pharmaceutical companies and bringing people together. It’s about being inclusive, working with the best minds and a broad range of stakeholders in precision oncology.”

### ‘Hope for the future’

Personalized medicine is becoming an increasingly essential component of oncology care, and El-Deiry steps into his new role with extensive experience as a physician-scientist and thought leader in the field.

“I’m a translational oncologist [and] a molecular oncologist,” El-Deiry said. “I’ve trained in [cancer genetics](#) and have been involved in the field of precision oncology for about 15 years, both on the research and the clinical sides.”

El-Deiry received his PhD in biochemistry and his MD from University of Miami School of Medicine. He completed his internal medicine and medical oncology training at Johns Hopkins Hospital and Johns Hopkins Oncology Center.

He served as a tenured professor of medicine, hematology/oncology, genetics and pharmacology at University of Pennsylvania for 16 years. In 2010, he began a new role as chief of hematology/oncology at Penn State University, and later became deputy director for translational research at Fox Chase Cancer Center in Philadelphia.

El-Deiry — recognized for his expertise in cancer genetics, targeted therapy, new drugs and resistance mechanisms — embraces the challenge of helming a global organization dedicated to [precision oncology](#).

“Every oncologist needs to have some expertise in precision oncology,” he said. “This has become a very important area that offers patients hope for the future.”

#### **‘We can do more working together’**

El-Deiry said his goals for his role as WIN Consortium chair align with the early vision of consortium founders **John Mendelsohn, MD**, and **Thomas Tursz, MD, PhD**.

“The original vision was collaboration, innovation and global impact,” he said. “Those are the key objectives. It’s based on the idea that we can do more working together to have more impact and help patients with cancer.”

From a scientific standpoint, El-Deiry said he wants the consortium to lead innovative trials that will attract the interest of peers in oncology around the world.

The WIN Consortium was “ahead of the curve” 10 years ago with clinical trials using transcriptomic profiles to predict the efficacy of drugs and drug combinations, he said.

One current focus area is n-of-1 clinical trials, with the goal to make them more personalized and patient focused.

“Part of the vision is that the future of n-of-1 trials is not going to be focused so much on specific drugs, but more on the patients and their signatures and tumors,” he said. “Moving forward, a key driver of what we do is innovation, because to really have an impact on the field, you want to be leading innovative trials that will get our colleagues around the world interested in participating.”

He added: “Cancer and host heterogeneity are among the most formidable challenges we face in oncology, even as we develop therapeutics against novel molecular targets.”

The consortium also will focus on collaborative efforts, with plans to partner with academic centers, pharmaceutical companies, biotechnology companies, foundations, societies and patient advocacy groups.

“This includes a focus on diverse racial and ethnic groups, as well as equity,” El-Deiry said. “Access to drugs, genomic and other ‘omic technologies needs to be available throughout the world with some equity in mind as these are life-prolonging interventions.

“We have also started to reach out and will continue to reach out to stakeholders — including societies and foundations [and] biotechnology companies — with the premise that working together, we can do more faster to improve the lives of patients with cancer around the world.”

Increasing the consortium’s membership in the U.S. — and other parts of the world where WIN will expand its footprint — is another priority, El-Deiry said.

“This is a great opportunity for cancer centers in the United States and around the world to join the WIN Consortium and participate in innovative, state-of-the-art, unique clinical trials that will impact the field,” he said. “It’s more than that, too, because when you get cancer centers collaborating, thought leaders from those centers get together and work together.”

El-Deiry hopes to further promote collaboration by establishing disease committees focused on tumor types, as well as think tanks that focus on emerging modalities that need to be combined with previously approved approaches.

“You would think the field of precision oncology would be tumor-agnostic, and there is some truth to that,” he said. “However, some of the best ideas come out of disease groups, and we can do precision oncology trials in a specific tumor type by addressing patient heterogeneity. Part of the goal of precision oncology is not only to figure out what combinations of drugs to use for better outcomes, but also to understand differences between responders versus nonresponders.”

### **Intense learning and collaboration**

El-Deiry will have an opportunity to discuss the WIN Consortium’s future and interact with members from around the world at the 2024 WIN Symposium, scheduled for March 1-2 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

The symposium, presented jointly by WIN and Burjeel Holdings, will feature the theme “Precision and Molecular Oncology: Caring for Patients and Future Generations.”

“We will have introductory presentations about the history and future of the WIN Consortium, and we’re going to have international experts from around the world and local leaders from Abu Dhabi speak,” El-Deiry said.

**James P. Allison, PhD**, chair of the department of immunology and director of the recently formed James P. Allison Institute at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, and recipient of the Nobel Prize in Physiology of Medicine in 2018, will deliver a keynote address.

The meeting will include sessions on precision genomics, precision immunotherapy and radiation oncology.

A session devoted to “community omics” will include presentations by **Katherine Tossas, PhD, MS**, assistant professor and Harrison endowed scholar in cancer research at Virginia Commonwealth University, and **Don S. Dizon, MD, FACP, FASCO**, professor of medicine and professor of surgery at Brown University, associate director for community outreach and engagement at Legorreta Cancer Center at Brown, and vice chair for diversity, equity, inclusion and professional integrity with SWOG.

Overall, the meeting program aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of key biomarkers, their ideal applications and new tests that will guide future biomarker adoption.

The symposium will feature oral presentations from submitted abstracts and poster presentations. There will be a molecular tumor board co-chaired by **Razelle Kurzrock, MD, FACP**, associate director for clinical research and Linda T. and John A. Mellowes chair of precision oncology at Medical College of Wisconsin Cancer Center, chief medical officer for the WIN Consortium and co-chair of the WIN Symposium, to demonstrate using actual cases how biomarkers can guide treatment selection.

There also will be an industry panel comprised primarily of representatives of diagnostics companies.

“It will be a day-and-a-half of intense learning interaction and collaboration,” El-Deiry said. “We hope that new ideas and directions, as well as new friendships and connections, will all come of this.”

### **Reference:**

Prof. Wafik El-Deiry elected chair of the Worldwide Innovative Network (WIN) in Personalized Cancer Medicine Association (press release). Available at: [https://www.brown.edu/academics/biomed/cancer\\_biology/news/2023/12/prof-wafik-el-deiry-elected-chair-worldwide-innovative-network-win-personalized-cancer](https://www.brown.edu/academics/biomed/cancer_biology/news/2023/12/prof-wafik-el-deiry-elected-chair-worldwide-innovative-network-win-personalized-cancer). Published Dec. 7, 2023. Accessed Jan. 17, 2024.

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