

## Local dermatologist speaks at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center

Written by Brian Schaper Special to the Chronicle  
Apr. 25

tallahassee.com

Dr. Armand Cagnetta Jr., MD, founder of Dermatology Associates of Tallahassee, recently presented findings from his research using a less invasive form of skin cancer treatment in the Dermatology Service of the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York.

On Thursday, February 21, Dr. Cagnetta was the featured speaker on radiotherapy in treatment of skin cancer.

“I was very honored to be invited and to collaborate with the exceptional doctors at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center,” Cagnetta said.

Dr. Cagnetta’s topic was “Superficial Radiation for Skin Cancer,” in which he is considered a U.S. expert, having published widely on the topic.

“The point of my research is to identify methods that approach the high cure rates obtained with Mohs Micrographic Surgery, but might be better suited to older patients or those with medical conditions, which preclude surgery,” Cagnetta said. It gives the patients a choice and provides alternatives for the physicians to consider based on tumor type and location.

The approach is an extremely cost effective and gentle procedure, particularly effective for elderly and frail patients with skin cancers on the face or scalp, which often require a flap or graft repair. Superficial radiation therapy on select tumors, done in an office setting, is less costly than surgical procedures and a fraction of the cost of electron beam radiation therapy done in a hospital.

As lead author, Dr. Cagnetta reported findings on his research in an article titled, “Superficial X-Ray in the Treatment of Squamous Cell Carcinomas: A Viable Option for Select Patients,” published in the December 2012 issue of the Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology. The study was the largest series ever done on superficial x-ray and showed an overall cure rate of approximately 95%. Dr. Cagnetta, along with coauthor Dr. Harris Green also of Dermatology Associates, co-directed a forum on the same topic at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Dermatology the week of March 4, 2013.

Dr. Cagnetta has been a frequent lecturer on the early diagnosis of melanoma and other skin cancers and his research is widely published on the topic. Melanomas are subtle when first developing and highly curable at this stage. By the time they are obvious, they are often in advanced stages and potentially fatal. Dermatologists and other physicians seek to identify melanomas early enough to have a good chance of cure.

A new tool called MelaFind® has recently been approved by the FDA to aid physicians in the diagnosis of melanoma at its earliest stages.

Dr. Cagnetta served as co-director of clinical trials for MelaFind® along with other top melanoma experts in the country. Dermatology Associates was the No. 1 site in the country for acquisition of melanomas for the pivotal trial – the largest study ever conducted on melanoma detection – which led to FDA approval of this advanced technology in 2012. Dr. Cagnetta, along with Dr. Bob Soni, Dr. Gordon Low, Dr. Stephen Richardson, and Dr. Harris Green will be continuing research as part of an FDA post approval study how MelaFind® affects the decision process of dermatologists in deciding which lesions to biopsy or observe.

“With the help of this tool, we have reason to be optimistic for earlier detection and reduced mortality rates in this region,” Cagnetta said.

Armand B. Cagnetta Jr., MD, founded Dermatology Associates in 1985, now with 10 highly trained dermatologists serving the greater Tallahassee area. He is the Chief of Dermatology in the Division of Clinical Sciences at the Florida State University School of Medicine and is also a fellowship director at the American College of MOHs Micrographic Surgery and Cutaneous Oncology. Dr. Cagnetta is widely published and frequently lectures on early

<http://www.tallahassee.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2013304250005>

detection of melanoma and skin cancer treatment. His book, "Radiation Therapy for Skin Cancer," co-edited with William Mendenhall, MD, of Shands Hospital, will be released in the spring of 2013. Visit the Dermatology Associates of Tallahassee website: <http://www.datfl.com/>