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- Amber Bauer, ASCO staff

What is the ASCO Annual Meeting? [1]

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During the last few weeks, we've been talking a lot about the American Society of Clinical Oncology's (ASCO's) Annual Meeting, and trust me, there is much more to come. But what exactly is this meeting? And why is it so important?

When ASCO was established 50 years ago [2], the founding members believed that meeting to share information about drugs and the treatment of cancer was a top priority. A year later, on April 9, 1965, more than 60 doctors attended ASCO's first scientific meeting, which was held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The scientific program focused specifically on leukemia and multiple myeloma.

If you can believe it, getting people interested in a clinically focused scientific meeting about cancer wasn't easy. As James O. Armitage, MD, ASCO President from 1996-1997, reflected in his Presidential Address: "At that time, it was difficult to get a paper accepted for presentation at any meeting if it dealt with clinical cancer therapeutics." In fact, oncology wasn't even a recognized medical specialty yet!

Things have definitely changed since then. Today, the ASCO Annual Meeting is one of the largest gatherings of medical professionals in the world. It brings together more than 25,000 oncology professionals from a broad range of specialties for five days of cutting-edge scientific presentations.

Throughout ASCO's first 50 years, we have collaboratively made life-prolonging and life-saving advances in all areas of oncology," said ASCO President Clifford A. Hudis, MD, FACP. "At the 2014 Annual Meeting, we will hear clinical and scientific results that promise to broaden and accelerate global progress against cancer."

The theme of this year's meeting, chosen by Dr. Hudis, is *Science and Society*. This theme focuses on ways doctors and researchers can close the gap that can develop between the scientific community and those who govern and lead our society. As our understanding about cancer increases and the number of innovative new treatments grow, we will all need a better understanding of these advances and the benefits that come with investing in science.

While you might not be in Chicago from May 30 to June 3, that doesn't mean you can't be among the first to know about the news and advances announced at the meeting. Here are just a few of the ways you can stay up-to-date:

- Get daily research highlights direct to your inbox by [subscribing to Cancer.Net's e-newsletter](#) [3].
- Check back here on the blog for daily podcasts with ASCO experts that will help put these findings into context and explain what this news means for patients.

Get real-time social media updates by following the official [#ASCO14](#) [4] hashtag or the Twitter handles of [ASCO's expert tweeters](#) [5].

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[2] <http://www.cancerprogress.net/asco50>

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/about-us/inside-cancernet>

[4] <https://twitter.com/hashtag/ASCO14>

[5] <http://www.cancer.net/research-and-advocacy/asco-annual-meetings/cancernet-social-media-coverage-ascos-annual-meeting>

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