



Ravi Bhatia, M.D.

Interim Director, O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center
The University of Alabama at Birmingham
Professor of Medicine

Director, UAB Division of Hematology/Oncology

Martha Ann and David L. May Endowed Chair in Cancer Research

Dr. Bhatia joined The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) in January 2015 as Professor in the Department of Medicine, Director of the Division of Hematology/Oncology, and Deputy Director of the Comprehensive Cancer Center at UAB. In April 2019, Dr. Bhatia was appointed Interim Director of the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at UAB.

Dr. Bhatia received his medical training from the All India Institute of Medical Science, New Delhi, India, and Hematology/Oncology and Bone Marrow Transplant training from the University of Minnesota, where he also did a post-doctoral fellowship in the laboratory of Dr. Catherine Verfaillie and Dr. Philip McGlave. He joined the Department of Hematology and Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation at the City of Hope National Medical Center in 1996, where he developed his career as an internationally recognized physician scientist, and was Professor and Director of the Division of Hematopoietic Stem Cell and Leukemia Research and Co-Leader of the Hematological Malignancies Program in the City of Hope Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Dr. Bhatia's clinical interest is in treatment of hematological malignancies and in hematopoietic cell transplantation, with emphasis on myeloid leukemias. His research interests are in studying the regulation of normal and malignant hematopoietic stem and progenitor cells, therapeutic targeting of malignant stem cells, and hematopoietic stem cell therapeutics. Dr. Bhatia's most significant contribution has been to advance our understanding of the biology and targeting of leukemia stem cells (LSC) in myeloid malignancies. He has systematically characterized the molecular and cellular events which underpin abnormal cell behavior in chronic myeloid leukemia (CML). He made the seminal observation that treatment of CML patients with tyrosine kinase inhibitors (TKI) such as Imatinib fails to eliminate LSC, which persist despite achievement of deep remission, resulting in disease relapse on treatment discontinuation. As a result, at present the major focus in CML research is development of measures to eliminate leukemia stem cells to enhance opportunities for cure. Dr. Bhatia has shown that quiescent, slowly dividing CML LSCs resist elimination by TKI through BCR-ABL kinase independent mechanisms. He has identified critical alterations in intrinsic regulatory pathways and in microenvironmental interactions that contribute to LSC maintenance. Insights derived from these mechanistic studies are being used to develop strategies to selectively target LSC.

He is the author of over 120 publications, and recipient of grant funding by the National Institutes of Health since 2006, a Scholar of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, a charter member of the NIH Hematopoiesis study section. He is an elected member of the American Society of Clinical Investigation and the Association of American Physicians, a member of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society Medical and Scientific Advisory Board, and chair of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society Translational Research Project Grant Review Panel.