



# Dr. Anil K. Sood: a close look at the targeted therapies for ovarian cancer

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## Editor's note

The *Clinical Gynecologic Oncology*, 9<sup>th</sup> edition released in 2017 is regarded as a must-have, readable and most comprehensive reference for diagnosis and treatment of gynecologic cancers. As far as we know, the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> edition of this book have been translated into Chinese, which have aroused tremendous attention in the field of gynecologic oncology in China. To benefit the physicians and patients in China and to further the communication in the field, we launched a project to dig the stories and ideas behind the book, and to share the recognized leaders' stories and insights of the field.

During this project, we were honoured to conduct an interview with Dr. Anil K. Sood, the Professor and Vice Chair for Translational Research in the Department of Gynecologic Oncology and the co-director of the Center for RNA Interference and Non-Coding RNA at the MD Anderson Cancer Center, who shared his insights of hot issues in the field of gynecologic oncology, stories of the book as an author and advices to readers.

## Expert's introduction

Dr. Anil K. Sood, MD (*Figure 1*) is Professor and Vice Chair for Translational Research in the Department of Gynecologic Oncology; he holds a joint appointment in the Department of Cancer Biology and is co-director of the Center for RNA Interference and Non-Coding RNA at the MD Anderson Cancer Center. He is Director of the multi-disciplinary Blanton-Davis Ovarian Cancer Research Program and co-leads the Ovarian Cancer Moon Shot Program.

Dr. Sood received his medical degree from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. His research is focused in three main areas: (I) mechanisms of angiogenesis and metastasis in ovarian cancer; (II) effects of neuroendocrine stress hormones on ovarian cancer growth and progression, and (III) development of novel



**Figure 1** Anil K. Sood, MD.

therapeutics. Dr. Sood has received recognition for his research accomplishments including the Hunter Award, the Margaret Greenfield/Carmel Cohen Excellence in Ovarian Cancer Research Prize, and the GCF/Claudia Cohen Research Foundation Prize for Outstanding Gynecologic Cancer Researcher. He is an elected member of the American Society for Clinical Investigation (ASCI), the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), and the Association of American Physicians (AAP). He was appointed as an American Cancer Society Professor in 2017.

## Interview

### *About the journey of Clinical Gynecologic Oncology*

**GPM: What sparked your interest in the mechanisms underlying ovarian cancer growth and progression?**

**Dr. Sood:** In my view, developing new and more effective approaches against ovarian cancer has to be rooted in a fundamental understanding of its biology. The existing dogma related to such mechanisms can turn out to be

wrong and we have to let the science guide us for a more complete understanding.

**GPM: What major changes have you observed in the development of biologically targeted therapies for ovarian cancer over the years?**

**Dr. Sood:** There have been many unprecedented advances in the last few years. These include the development and subsequent FDA approvals of anti-angiogenesis therapies and PARP inhibitors. Undoubtedly, more such developments will follow.

**GPM: Could you introduce us a research project regarding to targeted therapies you are involved in?**

**Dr. Sood:** We are involved in many projects related to developing new therapies. Among these, one project pertains to understanding the mechanisms by which tumors adapt to anti-angiogenesis drugs and to identify new combinations that would either delay or overcome such adaptive resistance. While such mechanisms in the tumor microenvironment are diverse, there are important opportunities for new drug development.

**GPM: What do you see the future development in targeted therapies for ovarian cancer?**

**Dr. Sood:** There are many future directions. These include understanding and overcoming adaptive changes in the tumor, developing therapies aimed at mutated p53, improving and identifying new immune therapies, and many others.

**GPM: You have received major recognition for your research accomplishments. Is there a particular achievement you are most proud of?**

**Dr. Sood:** I am most proud of working with my collaborators to help our patients, and also helping our trainees become independent scientists.

*About the book Clinical Gynecologic Oncology*

**GPM: When did you hear this foremost textbook Clinical Gynecologic Oncology?**

**Dr. Sood:** I became aware of this book during my residency training.

**GPM: We learned that you are an author of the 8th version of Clinical Gynecologic Oncology. Which chapter you involved in? Could you briefly introduce your work in this book?**

**Dr. Sood:** Yes, I have had the opportunity to serve as a co-author on a chapter related to targeted therapy and molecular genetics. This is a rapidly evolving field and we summarized up-to-date material in this chapter.

**GPM: What are the features that make this book stand out from other books in your view?**

**Dr. Sood:** This book addresses clinical and scientific topics in an easy to understand layout and is useful for trainees and senior clinicians/scientists.

### Acknowledgments

We would like to express our sincerest gratitude to Dr. Anil K. Sood for sharing his stories, insights and opinions with us.

### Footnote

*Conflicts of Interest:* Dr. Anil K. Sood's overall COIs include: Consulting (Kiyatec, Merck); Shareholder (BioPath); Research funding (M-Trap). The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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