

Emily Bennett Taylor: A Story of Commitment and Courage

There is no better person than Emily Bennett Taylor to tell the story that lung cancer can strike anyone. Emily recounted her journey from stage IV lung cancer to cancer-free status at Sunday's Opening Ceremony.

"I am thrilled and honored to have the opportunity to bring my patient story to this year's WCLC," says Emily. "I'm grateful IASLC is providing such a platform for the patient and is bringing the patient story to the forefront of the lung cancer discussion."

As a young, healthy athlete who never smoked, lung cancer was the farthest thing from Emily's mind. Yet when she was only 28 years old, she heard the devastating news that she had stage IV lung cancer. At first crippled with fear, Emily found courage and commitment with her husband Miles, and they vowed that "cancer would never steal one more moment from us." They joined forces to fight the disease and to give back and help other patients. They dreamed of one day celebrating a cancer-free status and of creating a family.

Emily told the Opening Ceremony

audience that she refused to listen to physicians who told her that surgery was not the standard of care for stage IV lung cancer. She finally met with Raja Flores, MD, Mount Sinai Hospital, New York, who agreed to perform surgery to remove her right lung after she had a response to chemotherapy. Following surgery, Emily received additional chemotherapy and radiation therapy. In May 2015, Emily and Miles hosted an elaborate party with friends and family to celebrate 2 years of no evidence of disease.

Emily credits the Bonnie J. Addario Lung Cancer Foundation (ALCF) with helping her during her lung cancer journey, and she became an advocate/spokesperson for ALCF. She speaks to people with newly diagnosed lung cancer every week, trying to give them the same hope that she says ALCF instilled in her. She also began a blog, EmBen Kicks Cancer, to offer support to people with lung cancer around the world. Healthline voted EmBen Kicks Cancer as one of the 15 best lung cancer blogs on the web in both 2013 and 2014.

Emily also participated in the Add-



Emily Bennett Taylor

ario Lung Cancer Medical Institute's Genomics of Young Lung Cancer study, but was disappointed to learn that she did not have an actionable biomarker. "I had to endure a toxic form of chemotherapy with a low rate of effectivity, and I am incredibly lucky that this worked," says Emily. "The Genomics of Young Lung Cancer study provides hope that future patients won't have to go through the same 'roll of the dice' that I did with traditional chemotherapy. Through [this study], we also hope to answer the pa-

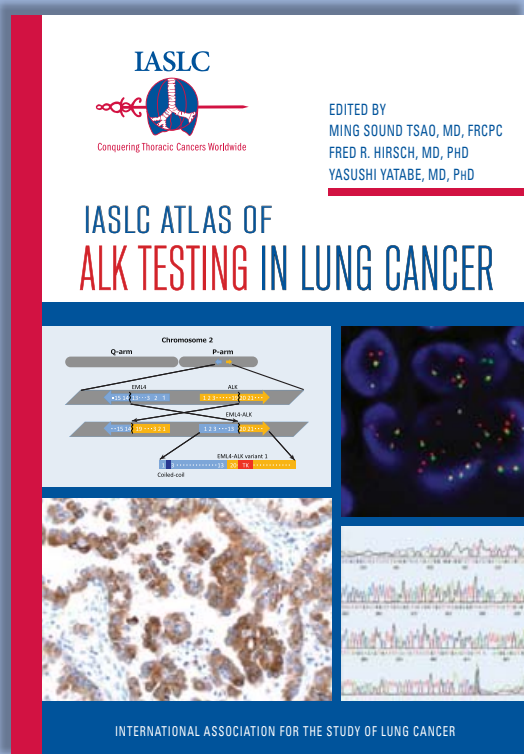
tient question, Why did I get this? and, in doing so, provide answers that will unlock the key to saving the lives of young people with lung cancer."

Young lung cancer is on the rise and growing at an alarming rate yet, until now, it has not been studied prospectively. The results of the Genomics of Young Lung Cancer study and of a study in Japan were presented at this year's WCLC (see article on page 6).

Emily was thrilled to participate in WCLC 2105. "I'm personally invigorated by the challenge of connecting with so many leading minds in the world of lung cancer. There has been such unbelievable progress in lung cancer over the past few years, and I'm so excited to learn about these latest advancements. For me personally, I feel I have a responsibility to represent all patients with lung cancer at WCLC and to push the patient story to the forefront."

Emily's talk at the Opening Ceremony ended with a standing ovation when she announced that her surrogate mother is pregnant and she and Miles will be parents soon. Her dreams have come true. ■

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IASLC ATLAS OF ALK TESTING IN LUNG CANCER

Edited by Ming Sound Tsao, MD, FRCPC,
Fred R. Hirsch, MD, PhD, and Yasushi Yatabe, MD, PhD

Invaluable guide to help pathologists, laboratory scientists, and practicing physicians better understand the background, protocol, and interpretation of results of ALK testing in patients with advanced non-small cell lung cancer.

Visit the IASLC booth to get this molecular testing resource for the selection of patients with lung cancer for epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) and anaplastic lymphoma kinase (ALK) tyrosine kinase inhibitors.

*In addition to English, also available in
Spanish, Japanese, and Chinese!*

Copies of the *ALK Atlas* are available to WCLC 2015 attendees at the IASLC Booth (booth # 3715).