SPARK
Translating academic discovery to patients’ benefit: Lessons from our 11 years of SPARK at Stanford

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Dr. Daria Mochly-Rosen is a director of the SPARK program that was established in 2006 at Stanford University, California, USA, in order to advance new biomedical research discoveries into promising new treatments for patients. The SPARK emphasizes new ways of thinking about bridging the gap between bench and bedside, and has a unique partnership between university and industry experts. Bridging the gap between bench and bedside is a challenging endeavor. There is an inherent risk that early-stage programs will fail during development, no matter how promising the science. Such nascent programs are unlikely to attract interest from industry until they have reached significant milestones, and very little funding is available from the NIH, foundations, or private enterprise for this critical transition. She provided a cost-effective model to generate proof of concept using industry standards. Since its founding, SPARK has advanced scores of new diagnostics and drugs to the clinic and commercial sectors and educated hundreds of faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and students on the translational process. We hope she would give us a special lecture with respect to how we advance the medical products that are derived from academia, through her 11 years experiences.