



Research

PANCREATIC CANCER ACTION NETWORK

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PANCREATIC CANCER: NEWS & UPDATES November 30, 2008

Tumor Protein Predicts Survival after Pancreatic Cancer Surgery

<http://www.oncolink.com/resources/article.cfm?c=3&s=8&ss=23&Year=2008&Month=10&id=15751>

Survival after pancreatectomy for pancreatic cancer is twice as long when the tumor is negative for the calcium-binding protein S100A2 as when tumors express high levels of this protein. In a large cohort of pancreatic cancer patients, researchers assessed the relationship between disease-specific survival and levels of 17 candidate biomarkers known, or suspected, to be expressed in pancreatic cancer. Of the 17 candidate markers examined, patients with elevated S100A2 tumor expression had a median survival of 8.8 months, compared with 19.4 months in patients whose tumors did not contain this protein.

Should Informed Consent for Cancer Treatment Include a Discussion about Hospital Outcome Disparities?

http://medicine.plosjournals.org/archive/1549-1676/5/10/pdf/10.1371_journal.pmed.0050214-S.pdf

Complex and high risk surgeries like pancreatic cancer resection show that patients have better outcomes and improved survival when the surgery is performed at a high volume center. The above link discusses whether such knowledge should be disclosed in the informed consent document and the physician's moral and ethical obligation to inform patients of volume outcome disparities for particular cancers.

UC Davis Researchers Discover Achilles' Heel in Pancreatic Cancer

http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2008-11/uoc--udr110608.php

<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/article/18918>

UC Davis Cancer Center researchers have discovered a metabolic deficiency in pancreatic cancer cells that can be used to slow the progress of the deadliest of all cancers. Their study results indicate that pancreatic cancer cells cannot produce the amino acid arginine, which plays an essential role in cell division, immune function and hormone regulation. By depleting arginine levels in cell cultures and animal models, the team was able to significantly reduce pancreatic cancer-cell proliferation.

Early Detection of Pancreatic Cancer: Why, Who, and How to Screen

<http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/581211>

Drs. Jason Klapman and Mokenge Malafa of the Gastrointestinal Tumor Program at the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa, Florida discuss the practical considerations of determining who should be screened for pancreatic cancer. They review the literature regarding risk factors, genetic syndromes, screening modalities, and screening studies of pancreatic cancer and discuss the high-risk pancreatic screening program at Moffitt.

Half-Broken Gene is Enough to Cause Cancer

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/128041.php>

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/11/081103130927.htm>

Tumor suppressor genes do not necessarily require both alleles to be knocked out before disease phenotypes are expressed. Research published in BioMed Central's new open access journal *PathoGenetics* reveals that only one allele of SMAD4 has to be damaged to put a person at risk of pancreatic and colorectal cancer.



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GenVec's TNFerade™ Receives FDA Fast Track Designation for Treatment of Pancreatic Cancer

<http://www.marketwatch.com/news/story/TNFeradeTM-Receives-FDA-Fast-Track/story.aspx?guid=%7B8356D01F-5D6F-451C-8989-8A9FEE00D3F1%7D>
[or see attached PDF](#)

TNFerade™ has been granted Fast Track product designation by the FDA for its proposed use in the treatment of locally advanced pancreatic cancer. The designation is based on GenVec having "provided evidence of the potential to improve survival in patients with pancreatic cancer." Drugs designated for Fast Track are intended for the treatment of a life-threatening condition and have demonstrated the potential to address unmet medical needs. To date, the trial has enrolled ~200 patients... accrual goal is 330. They expect to finish their interim analysis by the end of 2008.

Bastrop, Texas Man Beat the Odds with Pancreatic Cancer— Worried About Giving False Hope

<http://www.statesman.com/news/content/news/stories/local/11/09/1109pancreatic.html>

A seven-year survivor is reluctant to be a "poster child" for pancreatic cancer, but his doctor Dr. Milind Javle at MD Anderson sees him as a beacon of hope. Dr. Javle says that it is important for patients to know about him because, "By the time they walk into our clinic, they've heard so much negativity, there are patients who don't want to attempt any treatment. We have clinical trials and research, and unless we use the modern, innovative technologies, the science will never go forward. We do need poster children like him."

Pancreatic Cancer Survivor's Gift Kicks Off a New Research Initiative

<http://www.northshore.org/aboutus/press/article.aspx?id=6427&lid=141>

An eight-year pancreatic cancer survivor and her husband recently made the first philanthropic gift of \$500,000 to start Dr. Mark Talamonti's pancreatic cancer clinical research fund. It is expected that this gift will inspire others and that an additional \$2.5 million will be raised to further research initiatives focusing on pancreatic cancer screening at its earliest stages and treatment strategies for advanced stages of the disease.

Cancer Drugs May Build and Not Tear Down Blood Vessels

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/128997.php>

<http://www.sciam.com/blog/60-second-science/post.cfm?id=does-a-much-hyped-cancer-treatment-2008-11-09>

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/11/081109193433.htm>

Researchers at the Moores Cancer Center at the University of California, San Diego have found evidence that blocking the protein target called VEGF, or vascular endothelial growth factor, doesn't halt the process of tumor growth. Rather, reducing levels of VEGF in a tumor actually props up existing blood vessels, making them stronger and more normal, and in some cases, the tumor gets larger, although more vulnerable to the effects of chemotherapy drugs.

Cancer Program Carefully Monitored for Best Results

<http://www.calibre.mworld.com/m/m.w?lp=GetStory&id=329969711>

Ohio Health Cancer Services in Columbus has a program called CancerConnections which serves to educate and support cancer patients, intervening as close to their diagnosis as possible. Currently, patients diagnosed with lung, colorectal, or pancreatic cancer take part in the CancerConnections program.

FDA Warns Public of Extortion Scam by FDA Impersonators

<http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/2008/NEW01913.html>

The FDA is warning consumers about a fraudulent scheme to extort money from consumers by callers who falsely identify themselves as "FDA special agents" or other FDA officials. Several instances have been reported to the FDA of calls enticing consumers to purchase discounted prescription drugs by wiring funds to one of several locations in the Dominican Republic. No medications are ever delivered. A subsequent call is received from a fraudulent "FDA special agent" informing the consumer that a fine of several thousand dollars is required to be sent to an address in the Dominican Republic to prevent incarceration or other legal action.



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Several Trends Reported in Evolution of Randomized Controlled Trials in Oncology

<http://www.hemonctoday.com/article.aspx?rid=32760>

Compared to the past, today's randomized controlled trials in oncology are larger and more likely to be multicenter and international, and sponsored by industry. Researchers report that there has been a dramatic shift in sponsorship of randomized controlled trials in oncology from government to for-profit organizations. Although sponsorship status is not associated with increased effect size, industry-funded randomized controlled trials are more likely to strongly endorse novel treatments. The study authors examined randomized controlled trials in breast, colorectal and non-small cell lung cancer (28%) published between 1975 and 2004.

Cancer drug Bevacizumab Associated with Significantly Increased Risk of Blood Clots

<http://www.acor.org/news/display.html?id=7481>

Stony Brook University researchers found that the use of the cancer drug bevacizumab is associated with an increased risk of venous thromboembolism. The study published in *JAMA*, reports that the risk of developing venous thromboembolism was 33% greater with bevacizumab than with controls. The researchers conducted a meta-analysis of 15 randomized controlled trials that included over 7,900 patients with a variety of advanced solid tumors.

Oroville, California Cancer Cluster

Part 1: http://www.khsitv.com/mostpopular/story.aspx?content_id=a1f569c2-f93a-4c59-bff2-80c347f8d59c

Part 2: http://www.khsitv.com/mostpopular/story.aspx?content_id=e7da8396-a08d-445f-9796-3871b91623dd

The California Department of Public Health launched an investigation to ascertain what has caused a sudden increase in the number of pancreatic cancer cases in Oroville, California; cases there nearly doubled from 12 to 23 between 2004 and 2005. A report is expected soon.

Sacs Released by Tumors May Help Defeat Cancer - Genetic Info in Packets May Offer New Ways to Track and Treat Cancer

http://www.cancer.net/patient/News+and+Events/News+Articles?&reuterview=plwc_detail_view&reutersid=11839

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/27771912/>

Tiny sacs released from tumor cells and circulating in the blood carry genetic information about the tumor, offering a new way to track and treat the cancer. Researchers at Massachusetts General Hospital report that examining these sacs will reveal what kind of mutations are in the tumor cell. For most forms of cancer, there isn't a good way to know what genetic mutations are in the tumor short of taking a sample or doing a biopsy. These membrane-covered sacs, called exosomes, represent a new way of getting information about a cancer, seeing how a patient responds to treatment, and possibly offering a way to deliver therapies back to the tumor

Discovery Could Slow Spread of Cancer

<http://newsok.com/ou-discovery-could-slow-spread-of-cancer/article/3323558>

University of Oklahoma researchers have discovered an enzyme that may help tumors spread. Researchers hope to develop a way to inhibit the growth of pancreatic, lung, breast, and colon cancers.

Cancer Survival Rates Impact Type of Web Communities Used by Patients

<http://www2.med.umich.edu/prmc/media/newsroom/details.cfm?ID=851>

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/11/081118122143.htm>

A new study reports that online support communities for high survival rate cancers contain a greater amount of emotional support content than online support communities for cancers with low survival rates.



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Modern Cancer Drugs More Likely to Get to Market

http://www.cancer.net/patient/News+and+Events/News+Articles?&reuterview=plwc_detail_view&reutersid=1833

A study by Cancer Research UK reports that nearly one in five cancer drugs entering development now reach the market, which is a good success rate given the high level of failures in other disease areas. The study, which was based on 974 cancer drugs starting initial Phase I clinical trials since 1995, indicated that there was an 18% probability that cancer drugs in human tests would make it to commercial registration. This figure is significantly higher than in 2004, when it was about 5%. The sharp improvement is believed to be due to more targeted "intelligent" drug development based on a better knowledge of the biology of cancer.

Inhibiting Protein May Keep Cancer Cells from Refueling

<http://www.healthday.com/Article.asp?AID=621557>

Belgium research on mice suggests that inhibiting a protein that allows certain tumor cells to refuel may prove to be key to cancer-fighting treatments.

Misreading of Damaged DNA May Spur Tumor Formation

http://www.acor.org/news/whatsnew.html?item_id=7482

http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2008-11/eu-mod112008.php

The DNA in human cells is constantly under assault. Most of the time the cells can repair the damage before it gets copied into a permanent mutation that could lead to cancer. Scientists recently report that cells can turn on tumor-promoting growth circuits as a result of misreading damaged DNA without copying it: a process called "transcriptional mutagenesis."

Abstracts:

What is the Optimal Treatment of Localized Pancreatic Adenocarcinoma?

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18980025?dopt=AbstractPlus>

Stereotactic Body Radiation Therapy (SBRT) in Pancreatic Cancer: Is It Ready for Prime Time?

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18981547?dopt=AbstractPlus>

Intraductal Papillary Mucinous Neoplasm -- When to Resect?

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18953811?dopt=AbstractPlus>

Pancreatic Neuroendocrine Tumors (PNETs): Incidence, Prognosis and Recent Trend Toward Improved Survival

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18515795?dopt=AbstractPlus>