



**Research**

**PANCREATIC CANCER ACTION NETWORK**

ADVANCE RESEARCH. SUPPORT PATIENTS. CREATE HOPE.

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## PANCREATIC CANCER: NEWS & UPDATES

June 30, 2008

**2008 American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Annual Meeting (May 30 – June 3, 2008 in Chicago, Illinois).** Click on the links below to download detailed summaries (pdf format) of selected conference sessions that dealt with pancreatic cancer. The summaries were prepared by staff of the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network.

### Education Session

- [Upper Gastrointestinal Overview 2007-2008: Practice Implications of the Newest Data](#)

### Gastrointestinal (Noncolorectal) Cancer Oral Abstract Session

- [Abstract presentations for the following trials: CONKO-001, ACOSOG Z05031, ECOG E4201, AVITA, and CONKO-003](#)
- [Discussion of the trials listed above – “Is It Back to the Drawing Board for the Treatment of Pancreatic Cancer?”](#)

### Clinical Science Symposium

- [Developing a Patient Tailored Strategy to Stratify and Treat Patients with Pancreatic Cancer](#)

### Gastrointestinal (Noncolorectal) Cancer Poster Discussion

- [Discussion of five abstracts covering adjuvant, first-line and second-line trials for pancreatic cancer](#)

**2008 Gastrointestinal Cancers Symposium (January 2008 in Orlando, Florida).** Click on the links below to download detailed summaries (pdf format) of selected pancreatic cancer lectures. The summaries were prepared by staff of the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network.

- [Prevention, Screening and Diagnosis](#)
- [Multidisciplinary Treatment](#)
- [Translational Research](#)
- [Scott C. Wadler Keynote Lecture - "What Will it Take to Diagnose Pancreatic Cancer Early?"](#)

### **Nelfinavir Added to Chemotherapy Shows Promise for Pancreatic Cancer**

<http://www.oncolink.com/resources/article.cfm?c=3&s=8&ss=23&Year=2008&Month=06&id=15395>

[http://www.cpmag.com/reuters\\_article.asp?id=20080624clin004%2Ehtml](http://www.cpmag.com/reuters_article.asp?id=20080624clin004%2Ehtml)

The combination of the protease inhibitor nelfinavir and the chemotherapy combination of gemcitabine and cisplatin plus radiotherapy has "acceptable toxicity and promising activity" in patients with locally advanced pancreatic cancer. The researchers report that the use of nelfinavir with chemoradiotherapy is safe in locally advanced pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma because no added toxicity was observed.

### **Sparing Patients Treatments They Don't Need**

[http://www.cancer.gov/ncicancerbulletin/NCI\\_Cancer\\_Bulletin\\_062408/page5](http://www.cancer.gov/ncicancerbulletin/NCI_Cancer_Bulletin_062408/page5)

In cancer, a handful of molecular markers can help guide clinical decisions. For example, tests can identify candidates for drugs and at the same time markers are emerging that can identify patients who should *not* receive a treatment. There are no highly reliable biomarkers that can predict a *positive* response to a cancer therapy. Cancer biology is so complex that biomarker studies are more likely to find a genetic change that causes *resistance* to a drug than a single biomarker that predicts a positive response.



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### **Patients with Heart Disease Could be Harmed by Certain Anticancer Agents**

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/112539.php>

Washington University School of Medicine researchers report that a set of promising new anticancer agents could have unforeseen risks in individuals with heart disease. The anticancer drugs – called hedgehog antagonists - interfere with a biochemical process that promotes growth in some cancer cells. But researchers showed that interfering with this biochemical process in mice with heart disease led to further deterioration of cardiac function and ultimately death.

### **More than Half of Oncology Nurses Stop or Delay Chemotherapy Due to Nausea and Vomiting**

<http://patient.cancerconsultants.com/CancerNews.aspx?DocumentId=42208&Keywords=cancer,news,information,treatment,Chemotherapy-induced,Nausea,%20Vomiting,CINV>

[http://professional.cancerconsultants.com/oncology\\_main\\_news.aspx?id=42215](http://professional.cancerconsultants.com/oncology_main_news.aspx?id=42215)

More than half of oncology nurses will completely stop or delay their patients' chemotherapy regimens due to nausea and vomiting induced by therapy. Such findings underscore an unmet need in the prevention of chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting.

### **FDA Warning to Protect Consumers from Fake Cancer Treatments**

<http://www.fda.gov/consumer/updates/cancerfraud061708.html#top>

### **Research Links Sugar and Pancreatic Cancer**

<http://starbulletin.com/2008/06/23/news/story05.html>

Research published in a recent issue of *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* reports that a diet high in fructose and sucrose intake may play a role in pancreatic cancer etiology.

### **Patients with KRAS Mutation Do Not Benefit from EGFR Inhibitors**

[http://professional.cancerconsultants.com/oncology\\_main\\_news.aspx?id=42179](http://professional.cancerconsultants.com/oncology_main_news.aspx?id=42179)

Several presentations at the 2008 American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Annual meeting reported confirmatory data that treatment with epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) inhibitors such as Erbitux® (cetuximab) and Vectibix® (panitumumab) is only effective among patients with the normal KRAS gene, while those with a mutated KRAS gene demonstrate virtually no response to these agents. This means all patients who are eligible for EGFR-targeted therapies should first undergo KRAS testing prior to initiation of therapy. Although this article references colorectal cancer, where Kras mutations are seen in 30-40% of the cases, these data are applicable to pancreatic cancer where K-Ras mutations occur in over 90% of pancreatic carcinomas.

### **Weight-Loss Surgery Slashes Cancer Risk**

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/25269713>; <http://www.acor.org/news/display.html?id+6948>

Researchers from McGill University in Montreal found those who underwent bariatric surgery had about an 80% lower risk of developing cancer. People who underwent bariatric surgery saw reductions in the risk of breast and colon cancer, in particular, and also in the risk of pancreatic cancer, skin cancer, uterine cancer and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

### **Pancreatic Endocrine Neoplasms: Epidemiology and Prognosis of Pancreatic Endocrine Tumors**

<http://erc.endocrinology-journals.org/cgi/content/full/15/2/409>

Provides an overview of the epidemiology and prognosis of pancreatic endocrine neoplasms (PETs).

### **Studies Show Quality of Life Linked to Cancer Survival**

<http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/576355?src=mpnews&spon=7&uac=61043SJ>

Two large meta-analyses suggest that patients reporting a good quality of life have statistically significant better overall survival.



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### **Medicare Spells Out Rights of Hospice Patients**

[http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory\\_65997.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory_65997.html)

Terminally ill Medicare beneficiaries have the right to decide how they receive end-of-life care, according to new regulations from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). In the first overhaul of regulations governing hospice providers since 1983, the new Medicare Conditions of Participation (CoP) include explicit language on Medicare hospice patients' rights and a detailed list of those rights that did not exist under the previous regulations.

### **AMA President Speaks of Pancreatic Cancer Struggle**

<http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5im6L2N4qRgcZslMacjVHi7K90-tAD91A5N500>

<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory?id=5141891>

American Medical Association President Dr. Ron Davis was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in February. He spoke at the AMA's 565-member policymaking group in June urging his colleagues to "never take away someone's hope" in treating their patients.

### **The Doctor Factor - Doctors and Patients Who Battle Cancer Together Can Develop a Unique Bond**

<http://www.newsweek.com/id/141496?from=rss>

Page two of the article features the experience of a pancreatic cancer patient who felt a "human connection" with pancreatic cancer specialist Dr. Robert Fine at Columbia University. This patient has been so impressed with Dr. Fine's kindness and passion that she raised over \$185,000 for his research lab. Dr. Fine is quoted as saying, "I want my patients to live their life living, I don't want them to live their life dying."

### **Most Cancer Doctors Avoid Saying 'It's the End'**

[http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20080615/ap\\_on\\_he\\_me/med\\_cancer\\_the\\_big\\_talk:\\_ylt=Aq7GwCl8eg2iTh71dOOb\\_KXVJRIF](http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20080615/ap_on_he_me/med_cancer_the_big_talk:_ylt=Aq7GwCl8eg2iTh71dOOb_KXVJRIF)

New research shows that doctors who think they are doing their patients a favor by offering false hope are actually not. Only one-third of terminally ill cancer patients in a new, federally funded study said their doctors had discussed end-of-life care. The study reports that patients who had these talks were no more likely to become depressed than those who did not. They were less likely to spend their final days in hospitals and avoided costly, futile care. In addition, patients' loved ones were more at peace after they died.

Convinced that patients have a right to know, the California Assembly just passed a bill to require that health care providers give complete answers to dying patients who ask about their options. The bill now goes to the state Senate.

### **FDA Warns Individuals and Firms to Stop Selling Fake Cancer Cures, Fraudulent Claims on Internet Sites**

[http://www.cancer.org/docroot/NWS/content/NWS\\_1\\_1x\\_FDA\\_Cracks\\_Down\\_on\\_Bogus\\_Cancer\\_Cures.asp](http://www.cancer.org/docroot/NWS/content/NWS_1_1x_FDA_Cracks_Down_on_Bogus_Cancer_Cures.asp)

<http://www.cancercompass.com/cancer-news/1,14369,00.htm?c=1005:5:1:2>

The US Food and Drug Administration is taking action to protect consumers from fake cancer treatments. The agency issued 25 letters this week to 23 US-based companies and 2 foreign individuals warning them to stop promoting and selling products that fraudulently claim to prevent and cure cancer. The agency also posted a list of crackpot "cures" on its Web site, warning consumers to avoid 125 tablets, creams, teas, black salves, and tonics known to be scams.

### **NBC Reveals Celebrity Family Feud's Reality Star – One Celebrity Playing for the Lustgarten Foundation**

<http://www.realitytvworld.com/news/nbc-reveals-celebrity-family-feud-reality-star-heavy-celebrity-cast-7271.php>

Actor Vincent Pastore and his family played for the Lustgarten Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research on the Celebrity Family Feud. Recall that Pastore also played for Lustgarten on Donald Trump's reality show, *Celebrity Apprentice*.



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### **Immunomedics Announces Fractionated Pretargeted Radioimmunotherapy Improves Pancreatic Cancer Therapy in Animal Model**

<http://www.tradingmarkets.com/site/news/Stock%20News/1698097/>

Immunomedica reports promising preclinical results on pretargeted therapy of pancreatic cancer that can be further improved when given in small fractions repeatedly, and in combination with gemcitabine.

### **Researchers Identify Biomarkers of Early-stage Pancreatic Cancer in Mice and Man - Findings Bring Scientists a Big Step Closer to Developing a Blood Test for Early Detection**

[http://www.fhcr.org/about/ne/news/2008/06/09/pancreatic\\_biomarkers.html](http://www.fhcr.org/about/ne/news/2008/06/09/pancreatic_biomarkers.html)

<http://www.newswise.com/articles/view/541394/>

Researchers have identified a panel of proteins linked to early development of pancreatic cancer in mice that applies also to early stages of the disease in humans. This breakthrough brings scientists a significant step closer to developing a blood test to detect the disease early. The five-biomarker panel, if developed into a commercial screening test, may be particularly useful when combined with a currently available test that measures CA19-9, which is elevated in 80 percent of newly diagnosed patients but is not linked to asymptomatic, early-stage disease. Together, the biomarker panel and CA19-9 may significantly improve the detection of early-stage disease prior to the onset of symptoms.

### **Metastatic Pancreatic Cancer 2008: Is the Glass Less Empty?**

[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18515741?ordinalpos=47&itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed\\_ResultsPanel.Pubmed\\_RVDocSum](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18515741?ordinalpos=47&itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed_ResultsPanel.Pubmed_RVDocSum) (abstract)

This article examines the existing evidence in support of a role for palliative therapy in metastatic pancreatic cancer, describes recent developments with newer chemotherapeutic and molecular-targeted agents, and explores future study designs.

### **Opinion Piece - How the Senate Can Help Ted Kennedy: Urgent Reform in the Drug Approval Process**

[http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121314183727362033.html?mod=opinion\\_main\\_commentaries](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121314183727362033.html?mod=opinion_main_commentaries)

Representatives from the Abigail Alliance for Better Access to Developmental Drugs wrote an opinion piece in the *Wall Street Journal* discussing the plight of people with a terminal disease who can't access cancer drugs off trial because of the government's one-size-fits-all regulatory wall. They state that the introduction of the Access Act provides Congress the opportunity to help those with life threatening illnesses to get better access to therapies off trial. Under current Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations, access to therapies off trial proves to be a difficult and arduous process. The Access Act would create a new approval mechanism, called Compassionate Investigational Access (CIA), for patients who can't wait. Patients receiving a CIA drug must have a life-threatening disease, be out of approved options and unable to gain access to a clinical trial.

### **American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Ad in USA Today Calls for Increased Research Funding**

<http://www.asco.org/ASCO/Research+Policy/ASCO+Research+Issues/Federal+Research+Funding?ID=PA-C-researchfunding&vgnnextfmt=default&CMP=EMC-WD2528252215>

ASCO placed an ad in *USA Today* on June 2, 2008 calling for Congress to increase funding for NIH by \$1.9 billion, or 6.6 percent, in FY 2009, to keep pace with medical research inflation, to reverse the effects of flat funding and to sustain momentum in biomedical research.

### **Cost of Cancer Care Climbed Between 1991 and 2002, as Radiation and Chemotherapy Increased**

<http://www.acor.org/news/display.html?id=6919>

<http://www.oncolink.com/resources/article.cfm?c=3&s=8&ss=23&Year=2008&Month=06&id=15367>

The cost of treating cancer has soared in the United States as more chemotherapy and radiation treatments become available to more patients. While the availability of therapy is good news for patients, the added costs will strain public health insurance plans such as Medicare. While the study looked at the costs for treating four common cancers (colon, breast, lung, and prostate cancer), the rising costs of treatment is a concern for pc patients as well.