



News from the OHSU Brenden-Colson Center for Pancreatic Care

From the Directors

Dear Brenden-Colson Center Researchers and Supporters:

Spring is off to an exciting start with many new and evolving projects at the Brenden-Colson Center. You may recall our [announcement of a new partnership with Immunovia](#) for early cancer detection. While we invest in new research and clinical trials for early detection, we wanted to take this opportunity to highlight an existing clinical program at OHSU for screening people who are at high-risk for pancreatic cancer.

In the research section of this newsletter, we highlight an important paper from the Coussens' laboratory that provides new insights into the biology of pancreatic cancer and avenues for more effective treatment. You will also see from the announcement section, Brenden-Colson Center researchers will have a busy summer presenting their innovative work at national and international conferences. We would also like to extend a special note of congratulations to Dr. Joe Gray, one of the scientific leaders of the Brenden-Colson Center who was elected as a fellow to the American Association for Cancer Research Academy!

We have had many visitors in the past few months from academic and nonprofit partners. The visit by the leadership team of the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network was one of the most exciting as we found extensive areas of potential collaboration and a shared vision for eliminating deaths from pancreatic cancer. Initial next steps include investigating ways that OHSU patients may better benefit from the PanCan "know your tumor" program as well as evaluating overlap between our patient registries for areas that might benefit both OHSU patients and expand the PanCan registry enrollment.

Finally, don't forget to save the date for the 2016 PancWest Symposium being held by our collaborators at University of California, San Diego, on Sept. 24, 2016.

Sincerely,

Brett Sheppard, M.D.
Rosalie Sears, Ph.D.
Brenden-Colson Co-Directors

If you have ideas about topics or information you would like to see in the newsletter, please email us at brendencolsoninfo@ohsu.edu.

Upcoming Seminars, Events and Grant Applications

Monday, May 23

Jone Sampson, M.D., and Kelly Hamman, M.S., CGC, Genetic Counselors, OHSU School of Medicine
Topic: Clinical Genetics and genetic counseling
3:00 p.m.
CHH 3181 1B

Friday, June 3

Chris Corless, M.D., Ph.D., Vice Chair for Research, Chief Medical Officer, Knight Diagnostic Laboratories and Professor of Pathology, OHSU School of Medicine
Topic: Introduction to CLIA
8:30 a.m., Networking and coffee
9:00 a.m., Seminar, CHH 3181 1B

Deadline: Friday, July 1

Brenden-Colson Center Pilot Award Grants

Pilot award applications for up to \$50,000 for one year with possible renewal for a second year will be accepted until July 1. You must be an OHSU researcher to apply. [Learn more.](#)

September 24, 2016

Save the date! 2016 PancWest Symposium

Moore's Cancer Center, University of California San Diego [Learn more.](#)

Research Update: New paper from the Coussens lab

New evidence for the role of B-cells in promoting pancreatic cancer formation and growth

Researchers from three groups, including Dr. Lisa Coussens' lab, describe how B cells may be involved in the initiation, development and growth of pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma (PDAC), in a recent series of articles in the journal *Cancer Discovery*. The Coussens lab has reported that an enzyme called Bruton Tyrosine Kinase (BTK) regulates both B cell and macrophage-mediated T-cell suppression in PDAC development. The mechanism of this effect is mediated via interactions between two types of immune cells, e.g., B cells and myeloid cells, resulting in activation of BTK-associated signaling pathways in immune cells leading to changes in cell adhesion and chronic inflammation within tumors. Further, mouse model studies revealed that the FDA-approved BTK inhibitor ibrutinib lead to a reduction in PDAC growth and re-programming of the immune system towards a tumor cytotoxic phenotype. A combination of ibrutinib plus standard-of-care gemcitabine chemotherapy provided an additive effect of the two treatments that could significantly reduce or eliminate live tumor cells.



While there is still much work to be done, this study indicates a potential new therapeutic combination for pancreatic cancer. [Learn more.](#)

You can find more information about clinical trials with Ibrutinib combination therapy in pancreatic cancer at clinicaltrials.gov, trials NCT02562898 and NCT02436668.

Reference: Gunderson et al. Bruton Tyrosine Kinase-Dependent Immune Cell Cross-talk Drives Pancreatic Cancer. *Cancer Discovery*. March 2016.

In the same issue:

See related commentary by Roghanian et al.

See related article by Pylayeva-Gupta et al.

See related article by Lee et al.

Clinical Update: OHSU High-risk Clinic

Pancreatic Adenocarcinoma is now the second-leading cause of death from cancer in the United States. Most pancreatic cancers appear to be sporadic. However, 10-15% of pancreatic cancers occur in high-risk families or in patients with known genetic syndromes that predispose them developing pancreatic cancer.

Our multi-disciplinary high risk pancreatic cancer clinic offers a chance for patients at risk to have surveillance and an opportunity to diagnose pancreatic cancer earlier, sometimes even in its pre-malignant stage. Patients will learn lifestyle changes that may reduce their risk of developing pancreatic cancer, be referred to genetic counseling as necessary and undergo annual surveillance with MRI or CT alternating with endoscopic ultrasound.

Patients are followed long term and are offered participation for early detection research opportunities. Patients served by this clinic include those:

- With strong family histories of pancreatic cancer
- With known mutations that predispose to developing pancreatic cancer

- With hereditary pancreatitis

To make an appointment for the clinic, call 503 494-4373 or visit the [OHSU Digestive Health Center website](#).

To find out more about OHSU and Brenden-Colson Center clinical programs, visit the [Brenden-Colson Center website](#).

OHSU and the Brenden-Colson Center have received National Pancreas Foundation Center designation. [Learn more](#).

Collaboration Updates

We were fortunate to have a visit from Julie Fleshman, President and CEO and Dr. Lynn Matrisian, Vice President of Medical and Scientific affairs from the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network (PanCan) in early March. We had a great day of sharing our research and hearing about their programs. We anticipate several areas of future collaboration to emerge from this meeting especially around "smart" clinical trials and collecting comprehensive patient information. You can learn more about PanCan at their website: www.pancan.org.

It is not too soon to start thinking about joining us for the Portland PanCan fundraiser, PurpleStride, Saturday Sept 24th. Our own Drs. Sheppard and Vaccaro will be co-chairing the event this year. Watch this newsletter for more information as the event gets closer.



Congratulations!

Dr. Joe Gray was elected as a fellow of the AACR Academy, joining a select group of scientists "whose major scientific contributions have propelled significant innovation and progress against cancer." [Read more about this honor on the Knight Cancer Institute blog](#).

Dr. Erin Gilbert will be presenting a poster, "Physiologic Pancreatic Cancer Imaging Using Dynamic Contrast-Enhanced Magnetic Resonance Imaging (DCE-MRI)," at the AACR Pancreatic Cancer Special Meeting in Orlando, the International Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer 2016 in Glasgow, Scotland and a presentation of the same name at the Pancreas Club annual meeting in San Diego.

Dr. Brett Johnson presented a poster "Connecting Genomic Evolution and Multiscale Architecture in Pancreatic Ductal Adenocarcinoma" at the Systems Approaches to Cancer Biology Meeting in Woods Hole, Mass. He will also be presenting a poster with the same title at International Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer 2016 in Glasgow, Scotland.

Dr. Meghan Joly was selected for an oral presentation "Myc Cooperates with Oncogenic Ras to Drive Intratumoral Phenotypic Heterogeneity in PDA Associated with Poor Outcome and Therapeutic Resistance" at the International Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer 2016 in Glasgow, Scotland.

Dr. Danielle Jorgens presented a poster "Connecting the Genomic Evolution and Multiscale Architecture of Pancreatic Ductal Adenocarcinoma" at the March 2016 Nature-Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center Conference, Cancer as an Evolving and Systemic Disease.

Dr. Jason Link will be presenting a poster "Integration of molecular, phenotypic, and functional data in a clinically-relevant timeframe for presentation to a Pancreas Translational Tumor Board" at the International Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer 2016 in Glasgow, Scotland.

Dr. Brett Sheppard will be presenting a talk, "Pancreatic cancer: Biology is still king but the rebellion is well under way," for the Mayo Surgeons' Travel Club at OHSU in May 2016.

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