

# Study on Feasibility of Nursing Intervention to Reduce Pain, Depression & Fatigue for Pancreatic Cancer Patients Seeks Volunteers

The UCLA School of Nursing seeks volunteers to participate in a study that aims to improve the lives of pancreatic cancer patients and caregivers through innovative technology – not additional medicine. This study is the first of its kind to focus on the issues that surround pancreatic cancer, including depression and fatigue.

This project, funded through a 2017 Seed Grant, will look for a link between nurse contact and patient well-being, with online nursing touch-points to help improve depression. The study consists of 5, 10-15 minute long questionnaires over the course of 12 weeks. If you are a pancreatic cancer patient or caregiver, you may be eligible to participate in this study!

## Am I Eligible?

You are eligible if you have been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer or you are a caregiver for someone with pancreatic cancer, and you have no history of dementia, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia.

## What Do I Have to Do During the Study?

- You will be asked to complete an initial questionnaire that will ask you about your mood, symptoms, medication management, sleep, social support, quality of life, and

satisfaction with care. This will take about 10-15 minutes to complete.

- You will be asked to complete additional questionnaires during the 2, 4, 6, and 12 weeks after enrollment.
- If you and your caregiver do not have depressive symptoms, we will ask you to use the chemoWave app to track your symptoms for 12 weeks.
- If you or your caregiver have depressive symptoms, you will both receive 6-weeks of online cognitive behavioral therapy (iCBT) at no cost.

### **What happens during iCBT?**

- You will have access to MoodGym, an online cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) program.
- You will have weekly online sessions with the nurse therapist to talk about depressive thoughts and how to cope with them.

### **What Do I Get From the Study?**

- Free symptom management tools, including chemoWave and iCBT
- Greater insights into your treatment via symptom tracking
- Knowledge that you're helping researchers learn about interventions to improve quality of life and depressive symptoms for pancreatic cancer patients and caregivers
- Chance to be entered into a raffle for a \$150 Amazon gift card

For more information and to sign up for this study, contact Belinda Chen.

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## **Symposium Speaker Spotlight: Dr. Zhaoping Li to Discuss Nutrition & Pancreatic Cancer**

The Hirshberg Foundation is delighted to welcome past [Seed Grant](#) awardee and crowd favorite Dr. Li to the 15th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer to discuss the importance of nutrition for all those with a pancreatic cancer diagnosis.

In 2016, Dr. Li received a Hirshberg Seed Grant to help fund a [nutritional study](#) that seeks to improve the outcomes of pancreatic cancer patients that are not eligible for surgery. Dr. Li has spoken previously at the Symposium on the importance of nutrition for pancreatic cancer patients. She was integral to our [cooking class](#) for patients and their family members and helped to develop a handful of [healthy recipes](#). Consistently a crowd favorite, she shares important, real world tips on optimal nutrition for the patient post-surgery as well as for those non-surgical patients. We are excited to have Dr. Li speaking on *Nutrition and Pancreatic Cancer...Food Matters!*

Dr. Zhaoping Li is a Professor of Medicine, and Chief of Clinical Nutrition Division at UCLA School of Medicine, Ronald Regan Medical Center. She also directs the UCLA Center for Human Nutrition, overseeing the research coordinator, clinical dietitians and clinical fellows. She has been Principal

Investigator for more than 50 investigator-initiated and industry-sponsored clinical trials in the fields of nutrition, obesity and botanical research. She served as the Chair of Obesity Research Section for the American Society of Nutrition. She also serves as Board Member of UCLA Physician Practice Group.

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## **Symposium Speaker Spotlight: Dr. Suresh Chari to speak on Early Diagnosis**

The Hirshberg Foundation is thrilled to have the distinguished specialists on early diagnosis of pancreatic cancer, Dr. Chari, join us for our 15th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer on March 2nd, 2019.

[Suresh Chari, MD](#) is currently Professor of Medicine and a Consultant in the Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology at Mayo Clinic College of Medicine in Rochester, MN.

Dr. Chari trained in Internal Medicine and Gastroenterology in India as well as the United States. He has been the Director of Pancreas Clinic at Mayo Clinic Rochester. He has been Councilor and past President of the American Pancreatic Association as well as Councilor and past President of the International Association of Pancreatology. His NIH-funded research has been on new-onset diabetes as an early marker of pancreatic cancer. He was principal investigator of EXPAND trial, the first prospective pilot screening study for sporadic pancreatic cancer

in subjects with new-onset diabetes. He is also the principal investigator at Mayo Clinic for the U01 Consortium for Study of Chronic Pancreatitis, Diabetes and Pancreatic Cancer in which he is co-leading a prospective study on new-onset diabetes.

Dr. Chari will discuss *Clues to Early Diagnosis*.

To learn more about Suresh Chari, MD please visit

<https://www.mayo.edu/research/faculty/chari-suresh-t-m-d/bio-00085255>

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## **Symposium Speaker Spotlight: Dr. Ashok Saluja to address New Drug Therapies For Pancreatic Cancer**

The Hirshberg Foundation is excited to have the esteemed Dr. Saluja at our 15th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer to speak on new drug therapies that target pancreatic cancer.

[Ashok K. Saluja, PhD](#) is the Professor and Vice-Chair, Department of Surgery and Director, Sylvester Pancreatic Cancer Research Institute.

Dr. Saluja received his PhD in Biochemistry from Washington State University and did his postdoctoral training at Cornell University. Before joining the University of Minnesota in 2006, he was professor and director of the Pancreatic Diseases Center at UMass Medical School and, before that, at Harvard Medical

School for twenty years.

Dr. Saluja's research is primarily focused on pancreatic diseases and how it can be taken from bench to bedside. The Saluja Laboratory is interested in the role played by heat shock proteins in the pathophysiology of this resistance. The Lab has demonstrated that HSP70 is overexpressed in pancreatic cancer cells and that its inhibition leads to apoptotic cell death.

Dr. Saluja will speak about New Drug Therapies For Pancreatic Cancer.

To learn more about Ashok K. Saluja, Ph.D please visit <http://bm.med.miami.edu/faculty/facultybmb/ashok-k.-saluja-phd>

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## **Symposium Speaker Spotlight: Dr. Jeffrey Chen on Medicinal Cannabis and Cancer**

The Hirshberg Foundation is excited to have Dr. Jeffrey Chen as a speaker at the 15th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer on March 2nd, 2019. Dr. Chen is the Executive Director of the UCLA Cannabis Research Initiative, one of the first academic programs in the world dedicated to the study of cannabis. We are excited to have him joining us to discuss Medicinal Cannabis and Cancer with the pancreatic cancer community.

California is currently the largest population in the world with legal adult use of cannabis, yet years of research restrictions have contributed to a lack of scientific knowledge about

cannabis, particularly in regards to the therapeutic potential. The UCLA Cannabis Research Initiative (UCLA-CRI) is dedicated to the interdisciplinary study of the wide-ranging health, legal, economic, and social impacts of cannabis. Dr. Chen is passionate about accelerating research into cannabis and its compounds as potentially cost-effective and safe treatments for cancer patients, which he will address at this year's Symposium.

Dr. Chen has spoken on the topic of cannabis at venues ranging from the RAND Corporation and Senator Feinstein's Office, to the Yale School of Management and Nexus. His work has been covered by outlets ranging from the Wall Street Journal to Rolling Stone. He has spent the past four years working at the intersection of academia, industry, nonprofit sector and government to accelerate research into the health effects of cannabis.

To learn more about Dr. Jeffrey Chen visit, [www.uclahealth.org/cannabis/message-from-director](http://www.uclahealth.org/cannabis/message-from-director).

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## **Global Research Collaboration for Early Diagnosis**

Currently, pancreatic cancer has the highest mortality rate of all major cancers with 74% of all patients losing their battle within the first year of diagnosis. There is clear evidence that earlier diagnosis leads to improved outcomes. In a global collaboration, two Seed Grant Awardees are working towards methods to detect pancreatic cancer in its earliest stages.

In the 2018-19 Seed Grant cycle, the Hirshberg Foundation has

awarded grants to Gary Xiao, PhD at the Dalian University of Technology and David Wong, DMD, DMSc at UCLA. Both researchers are focused on techniques for early detection of pancreatic cancer.

Dr. Xiao's work in China has shown that analyzing the type and amount of very small bits of RNA (called micro RNA, or miRNA for short) can detect early changes in a cell's function suggestive of the development of pancreatic cancer, long before any symptoms appear. RNA is known as the "messenger molecule" responsible for translating DNA in our genes into proteins. Proteins are what actually accomplish most key tasks and process in our bodies, and miRNA regulates how much of the RNA actually becomes such proteins. Using miRNA would allow for the detection of pancreatic cancer in its earliest stages, with the possibility of better treatment options.

Across the globe at UCLA, Dr. Wong has been researching the KRAS gene, notorious for promoting cancer growth when mutated. His work has shown that specific mutations in a region (codon 12) of the KRAS gene can reliably predict the development of pancreatic cancer – in many instances before an actual tumor has become large enough to detect by any known imaging technique.

The awardees met on November 7, 2018 together with Dr. Bill Go, Chair of the Foundation's Scientific Advisory Board, and Agi Hirshberg, to explore the translational and clinical synergy of these two projects. This collaboration would bring together two early detection methods in the fight against pancreatic cancer.

"If each of these excellent techniques used together can provide even better early detection than when used independently – which early signs suggest is possible – we will have made a major step forward in the fight to eliminate pancreatic cancer as the deadly threat it is now," said Agi Hirshberg.