

Hirshberg Foundation Funds Study Focused on Pancreatic Cancer Patient & Caregiver Well-Being

The “Living with Pancreatic Cancer: Patient And Caregiver Experiences Study (PACES),” conducted by Annette Stanton, PhD investigates the physical and psychological factors that contribute to overall wellness. PACES continues Dr. Stanton’s esteemed career of working to improve the holistic health of patients & caregivers over the course of their cancer journey.

When diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, patients and their loved ones often do not know what to expect. It is important for patients, their family members and their medical teams to understand the ways in which this disease will affect them physically, psychologically, and socially. Understanding the far-reaching impact of this disease allows for the development of useful strategies for coping through treatment and beyond. This study is focused on promoting quality of life and health for those living with pancreatic cancer and their loved ones.

PACES is made possible by [Seed Grant](#) funding and the Hirshberg Foundation’s commitment to researching all aspects of pancreatic cancer in order to improve the lives of those impacted by this disease. Dr. Stanton addressed the importance of managing the emotional journey, for both pancreatic cancer patients and their caregivers at the [2018 Symposium](#).

Dr. Jonathan King & Dr. Mark Girgis to serve as Honorary Medical Chairs for the 21st LA Cancer Challenge at UCLA

The LA Cancer Challenge (LACC) is pleased to announce that Drs. King & Girgis have been named as the Honorary Medical Chairs for this year's event. Chosen for their groundbreaking advancement of robotic-assisted, minimally invasive surgery, Dr. Mark Girgis and Dr. Jonathan King will participate in the LACC on Sunday, October 21 in Wilson Plaza at UCLA. Both surgeons are part of the [Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases at UCLA](#), the only integrated practice units of its kind where patients can get extensive evaluation and a personalized treatment plan in just one visit.

[The LACC](#), held on the UCLA campus, is the Hirshberg Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research's signature fundraising event. Now in its 21st year, the funds raised through the LACC directly benefit groundbreaking research via the [Seed Grant Program](#).

"We are excited to have Dr. King and Dr. Girgis not only joining us on October 21st but helping convey our message of hope to the thousands of runners and walkers. Both doctors are past [Seed Grant Awardees](#) and know how important our program is for advancing the research landscape. Each Seed Grant awarded is a stepping stone to saving lives," said Agi Hirshberg, Founder and President of the Hirshberg Foundation. "Their participation shows our supporters that significant progress is being made, but will also help emphasize that more work is still needed."

This year the Hirshberg Foundation received 51 Seed Grant

proposals from across the country. These projects range in focus from treatment to targeted therapies, immunotherapy to metabolic regulation to the medical benefits of cannabidiol. The fundraising done by the LA Cancer Challenge community is key to funding as many of these projects as possible.

In Dr. Mark Girgis's words, "The importance of the Hirshberg Foundation cannot be overstated. These dedicated philanthropists have tipped the balance towards finding a definitive cure."

Pancreatic cancer is one of the most lethal cancers, on track to be the [2nd leading cause](#) of cancer-related death in the US by the year 2020. One of the difficulties in diagnosing the disease is the vague symptoms it presents, meaning that many cases are diagnosed once they have metastasized and surgery is no longer an option. The work that Drs. Girgis & King are doing with [robotic-assisted minimally invasive](#) surgery are helping to improve pancreatic cancer outcomes.

"With so much optimism on the horizon, I count myself lucky to be a part of the Hirshberg Foundation, leaders in the field of pancreatic cancer," said [Dr. Mark Girgis](#), co-captain of the [UCLA Surgical Bruins](#) team.

His co-captain, [Dr. Jonathan King](#) says, "The Hirshberg Foundation is a beacon of strength, hope – and most importantly – progress in the quest to cure pancreatic cancer. As a pancreatic cancer researcher and surgeon I am honored to be participating in the LA Cancer Challenge!"

Nutritional Study for Non-Surgical Pancreatic Cancer Patients Seeks Volunteers

The UCLA Center for Human Nutrition is looking for volunteers for a medically-supervised study funded in part by the Hirshberg Foundation. This study seeks to investigate the effect of oral nutritional supplements in patients with pancreatic cancer.

As we know, many patients with pancreatic cancer experience weight loss and weakness. These side effects often impair overall quality of life and can complicate treatment. This study aims to examine the effect of dietary counseling with and without nutrition supplementation in patients with unresectable pancreatic cancer. Entitled, *“Nutritional study to improve outcomes in patients with pancreatic cancer that cannot be treated by surgery,”* volunteers are asked to participate in 6 clinical visits over the course of at least 16 weeks.

You May Be Eligible If You:

- Have been diagnosed with unresectable pancreatic cancer (meaning you are not a surgical candidate)
- Have lost weight in the past 6 months
- Are over 18 years of age
- Are a non-smoker

The study includes 6 clinic visits scheduled 4 weeks apart.

At each clinic visit:

- Blood samples taken
- You will meet with a registered dietitian
- You will be weighed and have your vital signs measured

- You will be asked to complete a food record
- You will be asked to complete a 6-minute walk without assistance

This study is being conducted by: Zhaoping Li, MD, PhD; Seper Dezfoli, MD; Vijiya Surampudi, MD; Lee Rosen, MD

This study has concluded and is no longer seeking volunteers.

Novel Hirshberg Foundation Grant to Focus on Care for Pancreatic Cancer Patients

Pancreatic cancer remains one of the deadliest of all cancers, with a five-year survival rate of around 4 percent. It's no wonder that battling the disease takes a toll on caregivers as well as patients.

The UCLA School of Nursing hopes to improve the quality of life for patients and their loved ones through a generous grant from the Hirshberg Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research. [The grant](#) will fund a study to be led by Professor Lynn Doering and Associate Professor Eunice Lee.

Although there is ongoing research into a cure for pancreatic cancer, this study is the first to focus on the issues that often surround the illness, including depression and dealing with the symptoms of disease and the side effects of treatment, such as pain and fatigue.

“While most studies focus on the cure, nurses are focused on the care,” Dean Linda Sarna said. “I think this is an exciting opportunity to make a difference in a disease that is one of the deadliest cancers.”

There is evidence that, when treatment of patient-report symptoms are integrated into routine care, survival time increases. It’s also imperative to provide supportive care to reduce hospital stays and preserve quality of life, Sarna noted.

This innovative new study will look for a link between nurse contact and patient well-being and will employ an online nursing intervention to improve depression. It also will evaluate how the smartphone app [chemoWave](#) can increase collaboration with caregivers and improve patient well-being by recording and monitoring patients’ physical and emotional states.

“We are truly appreciative of the opportunity to conduct this study in order to grow science in the field, and help patients with pancreatic cancer,” Professor Doering said. “We are particularly excited to integrate this unique cancer-specific smartphone application to address depressive symptoms, and overall quality of life for these patients.”

Agi Hirshberg, who established the foundation after her husband died after an eight-month, seven-day battle with pancreatic cancer, said she is grateful to the School of Nursing for taking on the challenge of improving the lives of patients and their families. “It is my heartfelt passion to ensure the best possible outcome for pancreatic diseases, this time without any additional medication, relying on the human touch.”

In Memory of Jonathan Gold

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14th Annual Symposium Video Presentations

The Hirshberg Foundation is excited to announce that video presentations of the 14th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer are now viewable on our website. Hosted in collaboration with the UCLA Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases, 200 caregivers, survivors, medical professionals and researchers attended the Hirshberg Foundation's most important patient and caregiver event of the year. This was the first time the symposium was hosted at the UCLA Luskin Conference Center, providing an inspirational learning environment in a thoughtfully designed space.

The Symposium provides an experience where patients and their caregivers may ask questions, explore new options, understand advances in research and begin making informed decisions. As in years past, the symposium included several esteemed guest speakers, survivors and caregivers, each sharing expertise, unique perspectives and personal experiences with pancreatic cancer. Speakers focused on topics that would educate and empower families facing this disease.

"Each year our goal is to educate, empower and instill hope – once again we've made that a reality," said Agi Hirshberg, Founder and CEO of the Hirshberg Foundation for Pancreatic

Cancer Research. “We hope you will watch and learn from these newly released videos and the valuable information shared at the event.”

The Foundation staff works hard to ensure that the annual event is free of charge for all attendees. “We want to thank our sponsors, Incyte and Joanne & Ken Weinman, for their support“, said Lisa Manheim, Executive Director of the Hirshberg Foundation. She added, “The success of the symposium is made possible by the generosity of private donors, the participation of attendees and the expertise of our guest speakers.”

Plans are already underway for the 15th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer, to be held on Saturday, March 2, 2019 at the UCLA Luskin Conference Center.