Dr. Anirban Maitra to discuss Why is Pancreatic Cancer so Hard to Treat?

The Hirshberg Foundation is excited to have Anirban Maitra, MBBS, joining us at the 13th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer to share important information about the challenges of treating this cancer and the best way forward to make a difference in patient outcomes.

Anirban Maitra, MBBS, is Professor of Pathology and Translational Molecular Pathology at UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, and has been the Scientific Director of the Sheikh Ahmed Center for Pancreatic Cancer Research since August 1, 2013. Over the past decade, his group has made several seminal observations in the biology and genetics of pancreatic cancer. He also has extensive expertise with genetic modeling of pancreatic cancer and with experimental therapeutics and drug development for this disease. Dr. Maitra brought to Houston his passion for improving patient survival by discovering and developing ways to detect and treat pancreatic cancer.

“We need to remember that what we do in the lab needs to end up in patients. It’s not about an elegant experiment and an excellent scientific publication – it’s all about translation, translation, translation [to humans]” Dr. Maitra stresses. In his presentation at the 13th Annual Symposium, Dr. Maitra speak on *Why is Pancreatic Cancer so Hard to Treat and what can we do about it?*

EPC Hirshberg Award Winners Announced

At the 48th meeting of the European Pancreatic Club, held this past June 8, 2016, in Liverpool, winners of the Hirshberg Awards were presented by one of the leading pancreatic cancer researchers in the US. David Tuveson, M.D., Ph.D., Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory; Professor, Johns Hopkins University, handed out the Hirshberg Awards to the following winners:

Hirshberg Award for Best Paper in Pancreatic Cancer (Basic Science):
Simone Benitz, Department of Surgery, Technische Universität München, München, Germany

Hirshberg Award for Best Paper in Pancreatic Cancer (Clinical Science):
Jörg Kleeff, University of Liverpool/Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen University Hospitals NHS Trust, Liverpool, UK

Hirshberg Award for Excellence in Pancreatic Cancer Nursing:
Philip Whelan, – Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen University Hospitals NHS Trust, Liverpool, UK

Hirshberg Award for Excellence in Pancreatic Cancer – Patient:
Julie Simper, Patient/Support Group Organizer for PCUK

We congratulate all the winners and look forward to supporting the EPC in the future.

Seed Grant Recipient Receives Prestigious NIH Award

Dr. Timothy Frankel, MD, University of Michigan, has received the NIH Clinical Scientist Career Development Award. This award is a 5 year study totaling $875,000. The NIH funded project is the progression of his initial study of the immune-epithelial cell cross-talk, which will help discern why patients with chronic inflammatory conditions are prone to developing pancreas cancer.

Dr. Frankel received funding from our Seed Grant Program in the 2014-2015 cycle. To date, the Foundation has supported 40 new Seed Grant projects that have generated approximately 100 million dollars to continue our aggressive path to improve the outcome of a pancreatic cancer diagnosis.

I would personally like to thank all of our donors for their continued support and for understanding the complexity and the years it takes to advance medical research. The answers are coming one step at a time and we are getting closer and closer to treating pancreatic cancer as a manageable disease.

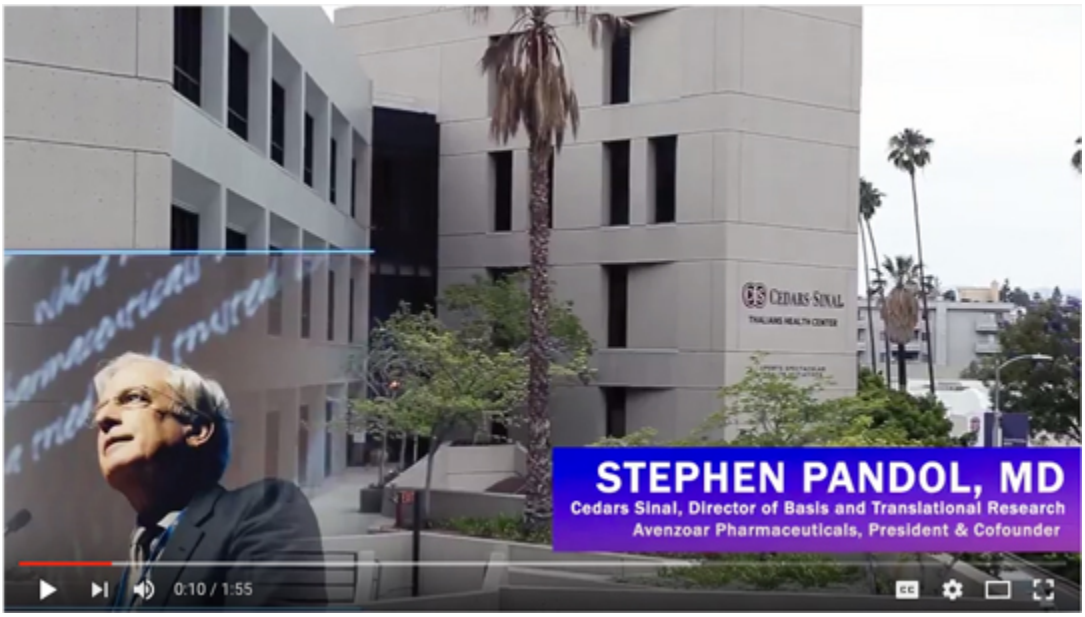
Read the full report

New Hope for Treating Pancreatic Cancer

Stephen Pandol, MD, and Mouad Edderkaoui, PhD, from Cedars-Sinai Medical Center have developed a novel drug, Metavert, to treat pancreatic cancer. The drug is designed to prevent metastasis of pancreatic cancer and enhance the effectiveness of current treatments. Metavert targets, simultaneously, two important proteins involved in promoting cancer growth and in spreading of the disease. Their data in animals show complete prevention of cancer spreading to other organs and significant improvement of the survival time of mice.

They also found that the drug kills human cancer cells in the process of spreading to other organs when they tested Metavert with metastatic cells taken from pancreatic cancer patients at Cedars-Sinai.

Dr. Pandol, a valued member of the Hirshberg Scientific Advisory Board and Dr. Edderkaoui , a Seed Grant awardee in 2013, are featured in the video below. Watch now to see which their progress towards developing this treatment for pancreatic cancer and their plans for testing Metavert in a clinical trial in early 2018.



Advances in pancreatic cancer research happen thanks to generous donors like you whose support allows new ideas to thrive. There is more work to do but we're getting closer! Every donation helps in our efforts. For further information about Metavert, feel free to contact me at info@pancreatic.org.

2015 Seed Grant Awardee Published

I am pleased to share the following publication featured in the prestigious journal "Nature, April 16, 2016". George Miller, MD, one of our Seed Grant Awardee's in the 2015-16 cycle, completed the project in record time. It is very exciting to receive results of our funded work so rapidly – a momentum that promises to unravel the complexity of pancreatic cancer.

This study shows the importance of examining cancer from within the actual context in which it grows, mainly due to the immune

response of the cells surrounding the tumor. New novel targets for potential anti-cancer drug development are made possible with the findings of this work.

We are grateful to the Hirshberg Scientific Advisory Board for their steadfast support of young investigators and we thank you for your donations which are vital to understanding the biology of pancreatic cancer.

And Dr. Miller himself asked me to tell you directly, “Thank you for your support!!!!!!”

Read Full Article

New method of drug delivery may be safer and more effective against pancreatic cancer

UCLA researchers use nanoparticles to send chemotherapy drug directly to the tumor site, reducing damage to healthy tissues

By Shaun Mason

The overall five-year survival rate for people with pancreatic cancer is just 6 percent, and there is an urgent need for new treatment options. More than 80 percent of pancreatic cancer diagnoses occur too late for surgery, making chemotherapy the only possible treatment. Scientists from the California

NanoSystems Institute at UCLA and UCLA's Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center have developed a delivery system for one chemotherapy drug that greatly reduces the occurrence of serious side effects while enhancing the drug's effectiveness against pancreatic cancer. The approach uses mesoporous silica nanoparticles to deliver the drug directly to the tumor instead of having the free drug spread throughout the body via the bloodstream.

The study was led by Dr. Andre Nel, associate director of the California NanoSystems Institute, and Huan Meng, an assistant professor of nanomedicine; it was published in the journal ACS Nano. Xiangsheng Liu, a postdoctoral scholar in the UC Center for Environmental Implications of Nanotechnology, was the study's first author.

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