

APA and IAP Awards Presented by the Hirshberg Foundation

The American Pancreatic Association and The International Association of Pancreatology joint meeting was held in Chicago, Illinois November 1-4, 2006.

The Hirshberg foundation has been a supporter of this event for many years. The meeting allows scientists and physicians from all parts of the world to gain a better understanding of the collaborative opportunities for interaction between clinicians and basic scientists in diseases of the pancreas. Most importantly, up to date research results are reviewed which are key to new therapies.

The two Hirshberg awardees from this year's event were:

M. Apte, Pancreatic Research Group,

The University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

"Pancreatic Stellate cells Stimulate Pancreatic Cancer Growth and Metastasis:

Findings of a Novel Orthotopic Model of Pancreatic Cancer"
Pancreas 33(4):472, 2006

A. Sultana, Division of Surgery and Oncology,

Royal Liverpool University Hospital, Liverpool, UK

"Meta-Analyses of the Management of Locally Advanced and Metastatic Pancreatic Cancer" *Pancreas 33(4):499, 2006*

We congratulate both doctors.

Five Seed Grants Awarded, November, 2007

Hirshberg Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research announced the recipients of their annual seed grant program. For the past several years the award has been given to a single researcher, but this year 5 grants were awarded from the 25 applications received. "This is a most exciting time for the pancreatic cancer research community. The number of new projects reflect the interest in pancreatic cancer if the research dollars are allocated!!! The goal for the seed grant awards is to create the pilot studies and be able to apply for NIH grants.

Hirshberg Foundation has been funding research since 1998. We have established a robust research program at UCLA and are now expanding that program nationwide.

Agi Hirshberg, founder, who lost her husband to pancreatic cancer has been committed to develop a screening and early detection method and improved treatment options. Our Scientific Advisory Board reviewed the proposals based on National Institutes of Health's review and funding guidelines.

Recipients are:

1. **Krisztina Kisfalvi, MD, PhD UCLA Division of Digestive Diseases**

Role of protein kinase D (PKD) in the proliferation of pancreatic cancer cells

2. **Harold Frucht, MD Columbia University**

Pancreatic Physiology in the Screening And early Detection

of Human Pancreatic Adenocarcinoma

3. **Christopher L. Wolfgang, MD PhD Johns Hopkins University**
Targeting Lipid Mediations of Pancreatic Cancer Growth
4. **Diane Harris, M., PhD UCLA Center of Human Nutrition**
Fatty Acid Synthase Inhibitors of pancreatic cancer
5. **Joseph Kim, MD City of Hope National Medical Center**
Targeting Chemokine Receptor CXCR4 to prevent Pancreatic cancer

Congratulations to everyone and welcome to our organization.

Vitamin D May Cut Pancreatic Cancer Risk by Nearly Half

September 12, 2006 – PHILADELPHIA – Consumption of Vitamin D tablets was found to cut the risk of pancreatic cancer nearly in half, according to a study led by researchers at Northwestern and Harvard universities.

The findings point to Vitamin D's potential to prevent the disease, and is one of the first known studies to use a large-scale epidemiological survey to examine the relationship between the nutrient and cancer of the pancreas. The study, led by Halcyon Skinner, Ph.D., of Northwestern, appears in the September issue of *Cancer Epidemiology Biomarkers & Prevention*.

The study examined data from two large, long-term health surveys and found that taking the U.S. Recommended Daily Allowance of Vitamin D (400 IU/day) reduced the risk of pancreatic cancer by 43 percent. By comparison, those who consumed less than 150 IUs per day experienced a 22 percent reduced risk of cancer.

Increased consumption of the vitamin beyond 400 IUs per day resulted in no significant increased benefit.

“Because there is no effective screening for pancreatic cancer, identifying controllable risk factors for the disease is essential for developing strategies that can prevent cancer,” said Skinner.

“Vitamin D has shown strong potential for preventing and treating prostate cancer, and areas with greater sunlight exposure have lower incidence and mortality for prostate, breast, and colon cancers, leading us to investigate a role for Vitamin D in pancreatic cancer risk. Few studies have examined this association, and we did observe a reduced risk for pancreatic cancer with higher intake of Vitamin D.”

Skinner, currently in the Department of Population Health Sciences at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, and his colleagues analyzed data from two long-term studies of health and diet practices, conducted at Harvard University. They looked at data on 46,771 men aged 40 to 75 years who took part in the Health Professionals Follow-up Study, and 75,427 women aged 38 to 65 years who participated in the Nurses’ Health Study. Between the two studies, they identified 365 cases of pancreatic cancer. The surveys are considered valuable for their prospective design, following health trends instead of looking at purely historical information, high follow-up rates and the ability to enable researchers like Skinner to incorporate data from two independent studies.

Pancreatic cancer is a rapidly fatal disease and the fourth-leading cause of death from cancer in the United States. This year, the American Cancer Society estimates that 32,000 new cases of cancer will be diagnosed. About the same number of people will die this year from the disease. It has no known

cure, and surgical treatments are not often effective. Except for cigarette smoking, no environmental factors or dietary practices have been linked to the disease.

In addition to Vitamin D, the researchers also measured the association between pancreatic cancer and the intakes of calcium and retinol (Vitamin A). Calcium and retinol intakes showed no association with pancreatic cancer risk, although retinol is an antagonist of Vitamin D's ability to influence mineral balances and bone integrity.

For that reason, further research is necessary to determine if Vitamin D ingestion from dietary sources, like eggs, liver and fatty fish or fortified dairy products, or through sun exposure might be preferable to multi-vitamin supplements, which contain retinol.

The potential benefits of vitamin D for pancreatic cancer were only recently established by other laboratory studies. Normal and cancerous pancreas tissue contain high levels of the enzyme that converts circulating 25-hydroxyvitamin D into 1,25-dihydroxyvitamin D, the vitamin's active form. Other studies have shown an anti-cell proliferation effect of 1,25-dihydroxyvitamin D, potentially inhibiting tumor cells.

"In concert with laboratory results suggesting anti-tumor effects of Vitamin D, our results point to a possible role for Vitamin D in the prevention and possible reduction in mortality of pancreatic cancer. Since no other environmental or dietary factor showed this risk relationship, more study of Vitamin D's role is warranted," Skinner said.

American Association for Cancer Research

Threshold Pharmaceuticals Completes Enrollment in Phase 3 and Phase 2 Trials for the Treatment of Pancreatic Cancer

[Press Release](#)

**Editorial recognizes Dr,
Howard Reber MD, Director of
the Hirshberg Translational
Laboratory and Professor of
Surgery and Chief of
Gastrointestinal Surgery at
UCLA**

[Pancreatoduodenectomy, The Golden Era](#)

Los Angeles Business Journal Fourteenth Annual Women Making a Difference Awards

The Los Angeles Business Journal held its fourteenth annual *Women Making a Difference Awards* Reception and Luncheon event at the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles on Wednesday, August 24th, 2005.

Described by attendees as an uplifting and inspirational event, the celebration honored Los Angeles based women who “lead by example,” successfully blending effective business vision with a passionate commitment to positively “making a difference,” both in the world of business and in the communities they serve.

Nearly 200 prestigious nominees were submitted to the judges this year, including Agi Hirshberg, President and Founder of the Hirshberg Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research as well as [SIDMAP](#), a leading provider of tracer-based dynamic metabolic phenotyping services that help biotech and pharmaceutical companies improve the drug discovery process.

Established in 1998, The Hirshberg Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research is a national, nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing pancreatic cancer research and providing information, resources, and support to pancreatic cancer patients and their families.

“It is gratifying to be recognized by the Los Angeles Business Journal because it brings more attention to an important cause that I truly believe in,” Agi stated. “Making a difference in the world of medical treatment and care continues to be my personal mission. My partners and I have a common goal and hope

of one day finding answers for the dreaded diseases we face as a community.”

It is because of her philanthropic efforts to find a cure for pancreatic cancer that Agi became interested in scientific research and founded SIDMAP, which marks the third entrepreneurial venture she has pursued in a career that spans over thirty years. “The more involved I became with the Hirshberg Foundation’s work, the more I realized that the cure for cancer must come from a variety of areas – including research and drug development,” Agi said.

SIDMAP is a new competing technology to genomics and proteomics that provides answers to organizations seeking to enhance the drug discovery and development process, and develop further insight into disease states. The intended benefit of SIDMAP is to shorten the time from discovery to FDA approval using the knowledge of the interaction of the drug and the cellular metabolic network.

In addition to her numerous successful business endeavors, Agi has tirelessly dedicated her life to pancreatic cancer causes both through funding and day-to-day action. She has lobbied congressional leaders, met with officials from the NIH and FDA, and become the central voice in raising awareness of the devastating results of the disease.

Combining philanthropy with business acumen, Agi continues to blaze a path of leadership and inspiration as a *woman making a difference*.