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Our Purpose

The Hirshberg Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research is focused on finding a cure for pancreatic cancer, and empowering the patients and families whose lives are touched by this disease. Founded in 1997, the foundation funds groundbreaking scientific research, provides patient education and support, and sustains hope that this cancer will be eradicated once and for all.

Our Achievements

- Awarded 97 Seed Grants to new investigators and expanded program to 40 medical research institutions in the U.S. and internationally.
- Funded researchers who have received \$130 million in NIH grants.
- Established the UCLA Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases, an integrated practice unit where patients can get extensive evaluation and a personalized treatment plan in just one visit.
- Promoted the collaboration of investigators from different disciplines with a shared goal of finding a cure.
- Raised more than \$27 million for pancreatic cancer research and education.
- Hosted more than 60 fundraising events to raise awareness and funds for pancreatic cancer.
- Presented the Agi Hirshberg Symposium at UCLA since 2002 for patients and families.
- Granted over \$1 million in financial assistance for patients.
- Provided support and guidance to thousands of patients and their families.
- Supported the American Pancreatic Association, Japan Pancreas Society, and the European Pancreatic Club's annual meetings.
- Partnered with the World Pancreatic Cancer Coalition to raise awareness around the globe.

The Foundation's dedicated efforts have significantly raised awareness and understanding about pancreatic cancer, a disease that continues to be one of the most fatal and least funded of all cancer types. Their continued funding of basic and translational research is their chance to offer life extension, better treatment options and, eventually, a cure. The Hirshberg Foundation staff is able to help when patients and families first receive a diagnosis of pancreatic cancer by providing doctor referrals across the United States, second opinion referrals, treatment facility referrals, nutritional information, financial aid information, emotional support information for patients, families and caregivers and someone to talk to that has been through the process from beginning to end. For more information, visit www.pancreatic.org.

The Hirshberg Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research is a California charitable non-profit, corporation. It is a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. The federal tax ID number for the foundation (EIN) is 95-4640311. All donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Pancreatic Cancer Facts

- In 2021 an estimated **60,430 Americans will be diagnosed** with pancreatic cancer in the U.S., and over **48,220 will die from pancreatic cancer**.
- Pancreatic cancer has the highest mortality rate of all major cancers. **It is currently the 3rd leading cause of cancer-related death** in the United States after lung and colon.
- Pancreatic cancer is one of the few cancers for which **survival has not improved substantially over nearly 40 years**.
- Pancreatic cancer has the highest mortality rate of all major cancers. **For all stages combined, the 5-year relative survival rate is 10%**. Even for the small percentage of people diagnosed with local disease, the 5-year survival is only 39%. The majority of patients are diagnosed at a distant stage, for which the 5-year survival is 3%.
- **Few risk factors** for developing pancreatic cancer are defined. The risk for cigarette smokers is twice that for those who have never smoked. Family history of pancreatic cancer, chronic pancreatitis, alcohol use, obesity and diabetes are risk factors. Individuals with Lynch syndrome and certain other genetic syndromes, as well as BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutation carriers, are also at increased risk.
- **Pancreatic cancer may cause only vague symptoms** that could indicate many different conditions within the abdomen or gastrointestinal tract. Symptoms include pain (usually abdominal or back pain), weight loss, jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes), loss of appetite, nausea, changes in stool, and diabetes.
- More than **90% of cases are pancreatic adenocarcinoma (PDAC)**, that develop in the exocrine tissue of the pancreas, which makes digestive enzymes.
- The less common pancreatic neuroendocrine tumors (NETs) develop in hormone-producing endocrine cells, or islet cells. **Neuroendocrine tumors often have a better prognosis and younger median age of diagnosis**.
- Treatment options for pancreatic cancer: Surgery, radiation therapy and chemotherapy are **treatment options that extend survival or relieve symptoms, but seldom produce a cure**. Surgical removal of the tumor is possible in less than 20% of patients diagnosed with pancreatic cancer because detection is often in late stages and has spread beyond the pancreas. Adjuvant treatment with chemotherapy (and sometimes radiation) may lower the risk of recurrence. For advanced disease, chemotherapy (sometimes along with a targeted therapy drug) may lengthen survival. Clinical trials are testing several new agents for their ability to improve survival.
- Pancreatic cancer is a leading cause of cancer death largely because there are **no detection tools to diagnose the disease in its early stages** when surgical removal of the tumor is still possible.

**Source for statistics: American Cancer Society: Cancer Facts & Figures 2021*