



PANCREATIC CANCER CANADA

NEW CLINICAL TRIAL STUDIES PANCREATIC CANCER TUMOR TRAITS TO UNCOVER BETTER TREATMENT OPTIONS

NEW YORK – March 30, 2021 – A new team of pioneering pancreatic cancer researchers has been formed to predict which treatments might work best for individual pancreatic cancer patients based on the molecular traits of tumors. The Pancreatic Cancer Convergence Dream Team is funded by the Pancreatic Cancer Collective, an initiative of the Lustgarten Foundation and Stand Up To Cancer® (SU2C), SU2C Canada and Pancreatic Cancer Canada.

The team will be led by Jennifer Knox, MD, the Lewitt Chair in Pancreatic Cancer Research at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, part of University Health Network, and professor of medicine at the University of Toronto in Canada, and Elizabeth Jaffee, MD, a professor of oncology and deputy director of the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, Maryland.

“This team’s cutting-edge work to better understand the makeup of pancreatic cancers will benefit tens of thousands of cancer patients in the United States and around the world,” said Nobel Laureate Phillip A. Sharp, PhD, chair of the SU2C Scientific Advisory Committee, co-chair of the SU2C Canada Scientific Advisory Committee and Institute professor at the David H. Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. “Pancreatic Cancer Collective-supported research has already contributed to a 2013 FDA approval of a combination therapy for advanced pancreatic cancer; the work of this Dream Team is an important next step in determining if that treatment, or another leading treatment, will work best for different pancreatic cancer subtypes.”

Pancreatic cancer is the third leading cause of cancer-related death in both the United States and Canada and is exceptionally difficult to treat. The five-year survival rate for pancreatic cancer is [around 10% in the United States](#) and [8% in Canada](#). Additionally, Black people [in the U.S.](#) and [Canada](#) are more likely to develop pancreatic cancer than whites. In the U.S., the incidence of pancreatic cancer is [19% higher in Black men compared to white men, and 36% higher in Black women compared to white women](#). The Dream Team hopes to address this disparity by making recruitment of diverse patients a top priority in their research.

The Dream Team recently opened a phase II clinical trial entitled *Pancreatic Adenocarcinoma Signature Stratification for Treatment (PASS-01) Trial* looking more closely at the two leading treatments for advanced pancreatic cancer. One of those treatments is Modified FOLFIRINOX, which is a combination of four chemotherapy drugs. The other treatment is a combination of chemotherapy drugs gemcitabine and nab-paclitaxel. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved that treatment in 2013 based, in part, on the work of a previous [SU2C Pancreatic Dream Team](#), which was a part of the Pancreatic Cancer Collective portfolio.

The two treatments are helpful for some pancreatic cancer patients but have little effect for other patients. The goal of the PASS-01 trial is to uncover more about how the two treatments work. Currently, precision medicine for pancreatic cancer patients includes a comprehensive evaluation of the tumor's genomic profile. But, doctors still don't know enough about the different types of pancreatic cancer to determine whether either treatment will help an individual patient, and if so, which treatment might work best. Building on the findings from a pancreatic cancer clinical trial conducted by the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research—which also is a collaborator on the PASS-01 trial—potential predictors of patient response to chemotherapy will be further tested by Knox and Jaffee and their Dream Team colleagues. They also hope the trial will help them learn more about biomarkers within patients' tumors. Their goal is to be able to identify specific biomarkers that indicate whether a pancreatic cancer will respond better to one treatment versus the other.

At the same time, the clinical trial will explore another promising method in fighting pancreatic cancer by uncovering the unique characteristics of individual patients' tumors. Collaborators at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in Cold Spring, New York, will create patient-derived organoids (PDOs) from biopsies of trial participants' tumors. The miniature 3-D structures are grown in lab dishes from tiny bits of tumors taken from patients. Scientists then see how the PDOs react to different types of cancer drugs. This work may lead to more effective individualized treatments for pancreatic cancer.

“We have brought together some of the finest pancreatic cancer researchers in North America; the time is right to dig in much deeper to help understand pancreatic cancer,” Knox said. “We need to stop assuming one size fits all and instead advance the field by gaining a better understanding of every tumor. We believe our work can help doctors treat patients optimally today while providing a better understanding of this deadly disease into the near future.”

“There is a critical need to identify ways that medicine can better treat pancreatic cancers,” Jaffee said. “We believe by identifying and learning more about these biomarkers, we can help make that happen. We can give patients more hope that their cancers can be treated effectively.”

“Personalized medicine has been a game changer in the treatment of many other cancers and this trial is a significant step toward offering this type of individualized care to metastatic pancreatic cancer patients,” said David Tuveson, MD, PhD, chief scientist for the Lustgarten Foundation and director of the Lustgarten Foundation Pancreatic Cancer Research Lab at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory where pancreatic cancer organoids were co-developed. “The international partnership between these organizations is a great example of collaboration between labs to help physicians make faster, better informed decisions in efforts to provide patients with better outcomes.”

Knox and Jaffee have already begun enrolling clinical trial participants at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre and Johns Hopkins. The team hopes to enroll 150 patients in the trial, with four additional locations throughout the United States and Canada opening soon, including Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City, Northwell Health in Long Island, Dana Farber Cancer Institute in Boston and BC Cancer in Vancouver, B.C.

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Media Contact:

Mirabai Vogt-James
Stand Up To Cancer

mjames@su2c.org

About Stand Up To Cancer

Stand Up To Cancer® (SU2C) raises funds to accelerate the pace of research to get new therapies to patients quickly and save lives now. SU2C, a division of the Entertainment Industry Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, was established in 2008 by media and entertainment leaders who utilize these communities' resources to engage the public in supporting a new, collaborative model of cancer research, to increase awareness about cancer prevention, and to highlight progress being made in the fight against the disease. As of 2021, more than 1,950 scientists representing more than 210 institutions are involved in SU2C-funded research projects.

Under the direction of our Scientific Advisory Committee, led by Nobel laureate Phillip A. Sharp, Ph.D., SU2C operates rigorous competitive review processes to identify the best research proposals to recommend for funding, oversee grants administration, and ensure collaboration across research programs.

Current members of the SU2C Founders and Advisors Committee (FAC) include Katie Couric, Sherry Lansing, Kathleen Lobb, Lisa Paulsen, Rusty Robertson, Sue Schwartz, Pamela Oas Williams, and Ellen Ziffren. The late Laura Ziskin and the late Noreen Fraser are also co-founders. Sung Poblete, Ph.D., R.N., serves as SU2C's CEO. For more information, visit StandUpToCancer.org.

About the Pancreatic Cancer Collective

The Pancreatic Cancer Collective is an initiative of Lustgarten Foundation and Stand Up To Cancer to improve pancreatic cancer patient outcomes. Together, these leading cancer research organizations have funded 26 projects for a total of more than \$108 million and are attracting new collaborators; employing big data to improve diagnosis of pancreatic cancer; finding new treatments for pancreatic cancer; and supporting the next generation of pancreatic cancer investigators. Engaging thought leaders, researchers, institutions, and companies, the Collective is innovating and accelerating research on the edge of science. For more information, visit PancreaticCancerCollective.org.

About the Lustgarten Foundation

The Lustgarten Foundation is the largest private funder of pancreatic cancer research in the world. Based in Woodbury, N.Y., the Foundation's mission is to cure pancreatic cancer by funding scientific and clinical research related to the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of pancreatic cancer; providing research information and clinical support services to patients, caregivers and individuals at high risk; and increasing public awareness and hope for those dealing with this disease. Since its inception, the Lustgarten Foundation has directed more than \$200 million to research and has assembled the best scientific minds with the hope that one day, a cure can be found. Thanks to separate funding to support administrative expenses, 100 percent of your donation funds pancreatic cancer research. For more information, visit Lustgarten.org.

About Stand Up To Cancer Canada

Stand Up To Cancer Canada is a Canadian registered charity (Reg: # 80550 6730 RR0001), launched by the U.S.-based Entertainment Industry Foundation in 2014. Stand Up To Cancer Canada (SU2C Canada) raises funds to support collaborative cancer research teams, as well as education and awareness programs conducted in Canada.

Under the direction of our SU2C Canada Scientific Advisory Committee, co-led by Alan Bernstein, Ph.D., president of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research (CIFAR) and Nobel laureate Phillip A. Sharp, Ph.D., SU2C Canada operates rigorous competitive review processes to identify the best research proposals to recommend for funding, oversee grants administration, and ensure collaboration across research programs. SU2C Canada currently supports three “signature” Dream Teams engaging dozens of the best and brightest researchers in different disciplines from 15 institutions across the country.

In addition to a board of leading Canadian broadcaster representation, SU2C Canada is guided by the SU2C Council of Founders and Advisors (CFA) including Katie Couric, Sherry Lansing, Kathleen Lobb, Lisa Paulsen, Rusty Robertson, Sue Schwartz, Pamela Oas Williams, and Ellen Ziffren. The late Laura Ziskin and the late Noreen Fraser were also co-founders. Sung Poblete, Ph.D., RN serves as SU2C CEO. The CFA includes entertainment industry leaders who utilize these communities’ resources to engage the public in supporting this new, collaborative model of cancer research, to increase awareness about cancer prevention, and to highlight progress being made in the fight against the disease. For more information on Stand Up To Cancer Canada, visit StandUpToCancer.ca.

About Pancreatic Cancer Canada

Pancreatic Cancer Canada is fighting to raise survival rates for the world's toughest cancer investing in targeted research, increased awareness and patient support, community activation and advocacy. We have taken on one of the world's deadliest cancers — a disease with virtually no progress in survival in the past 40 years and a 92% mortality rate. We are aggressively fighting it with investments in research aimed at greater understanding of this cancer and better treatment options. At the same time, we are working to educate physicians about faster diagnosis and with patients/families to support them as they face the realities of this cancer in their lives. To learn more, please visit www.pccf.ca.