



# Australian Pancreatic Cancer Genome Initiative

At the Garvan Institute of Medical Research

## NEWSLETTER

July 2012

### Research Update from the APGI Research Team

We thank you for your contribution to the APGI. Our patients, families and the community are important to us and we hope you enjoy reading a snapshot of our progress over the last year.

The APGI brings together more than 200 scientists and doctors at more than a dozen institutions across the country, and uses innovative tools and technologies to create a catalogue of genetic changes important in pancreatic cancer.

APGI contributes critical data on pancreatic cancer to the International Cancer Genome Consortium (ICGC) which involves researchers from more than 13 countries around the world.

The last two years has been a period of exponential growth for the APGI. We recruited our 400th patient, analysed the first 150 patient genomes, and from this, the scientific understanding of the molecular roots of pancreatic cancer is improving daily.

Analysis of the first 150 genome sequences has confirmed the importance of some known cancer causing changes in DNA, called mutations. This work has also identified potential new mutations that may be responsible for driving pancreatic cancer, and importantly has identified a collection of genes that together form a critical 'pathway' that is damaged in pancreatic cancer. We now have a deeper understanding of how complex pancreatic cancer is and how it is proving to be unique for each patient.

This recent APGI research is giving us the power to identify key genetic "targets" within pancreatic cancer cells and in the future will enable us to create therapeutics designed to combat those targets. It is also providing new ways to help clinicians develop personalised treatment plans for each patient.



### November is Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month

To mark pancreatic cancer awareness month around the world, the APGI is working to recognise the month and urging people to get involved in the various activities and events being planned around the country.

#### Save the dates

**1 November - Garvan Symposium, Sydney**

**12 November - Garvan Event, Brisbane**

**18 November - Put Your Foot Down for Pancreatic Cancer with Avner's Foundation**

**19 November - Garvan Event, Adelaide**

**30 November - Garvan Event, Melbourne**

Details about these events will be available shortly, so please check our website for updates

<http://www.pancreaticcancer.net.au/news/november-pancreatic-cancer-awareness-month>

Through Pancreatic Cancer Awareness month we hope to educate the community about the disease and the world-class research being conducted in Australia. It is also an opportunity to support patients with pancreatic cancer, their families, friends and carers, and advocate to improve outcomes, treatment and quality of life for people with pancreatic cancer.

But we need your help. We are looking for individuals and families in NSW, QLD, SA and Vic to share their stories with us during this month. We know learning that yourself or a loved one has pancreatic cancer is a long and emotional journey. We also know that the effects of this disease and its treatment can present all kinds of unique challenges. We are looking for courageous and optimistic volunteers to share their journeys with us. Lets bring pancreatic cancer out of the shadows and into the spotlight this November.

**If you are interested in finding out more, or to volunteer please email us at:**  
[info@pancreaticcancer.net.au](mailto:info@pancreaticcancer.net.au)

**or submit the form at:**  
[www.bit.ly/pancreatic-cancer-story](http://www.bit.ly/pancreatic-cancer-story)

### Contact

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 [www.pancreaticcancer.net.au](http://www.pancreaticcancer.net.au)

 [www.twitter.com/APGI\\_Oz](http://www.twitter.com/APGI_Oz)

## Community Support and Fundraising

We are so grateful for all the support and fundraising efforts you and your communities provide, allowing us to continue our research into pancreatic cancer.

Here is a snapshot of inspirational activities currently fundraising for pancreatic cancer.



### Trek 4 Treatment

Blaire, Wade and Karlena will trek from Lukla to the base camp of Everest in Nepal for 14 days, in loving memory of their dear father and friend Lee, who lost his battle with pancreatic cancer earlier this year.

[www.everydayhero.com.au/Trek4Treatment](http://www.everydayhero.com.au/Trek4Treatment)

### The Age Run, Melbourne 2012

Jennifer Greive lost her dad to pancreatic cancer in May this year and ran her heart out in Melbourne for pancreatic research.

[www.runmelbourne.everydayhero.com.au/jennifer\\_greive](http://www.runmelbourne.everydayhero.com.au/jennifer_greive)

### Quinton's IGA Fundraiser

Hayley Farrugia is raising money for her step-father and life mentor Brian John Quinton.

[www.giving.garvan.org.au/Page.aspx?pid=386&frsid=919](http://www.giving.garvan.org.au/Page.aspx?pid=386&frsid=919)



### City To Surf 2012 - Lizzy's Heroes

There's a whole team of supporters running this year's City To Surf, under the team name Lizzy's Heroes.

[www.fundraise.city2surf.com.au/lizzys\\_heroes](http://www.fundraise.city2surf.com.au/lizzys_heroes)

### Hilary's Handmade Creations

Hilary makes beautiful bracelets, bookmarks, earrings and keyrings, all handmade for Pancreatic Cancer awareness.

[www.hilaryshandmadecreations.com](http://www.hilaryshandmadecreations.com)

**If you would like to support our research, there are many ways you can help out.**

*Please visit:*

[www.pancreaticcancer.net.au/donate](http://www.pancreaticcancer.net.au/donate)  
for more information.

## AFPACC

Australian Familial Pancreatic Cancer Cohort

AFPACC aims to establish the first Australian registry of individuals and families with a history of pancreatic cancer. Participation is simple and involves a questionnaire, and for some people a blood sample.

In the future, families may benefit from testing to identify inherited pre-disposing genetic faults, and have specific risks for pancreatic cancer assessed.

To date, we have recruited 100 individuals, representing 74 different Australian families. 36 "high risk" individuals have been identified as eligible for the pancreatic cancer screening trial at St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney.

***AFPACC relies on willing participants to reach its full potential.***

Awareness is the first step, and we are liaising with Familial Cancer Clinics and hospitals around Sydney to spread the word. If you, or someone you know, has had first hand experience with this devastating disease and wish to find out more about the study, there are a number of ways you can contact us:

- Fill out an online request via our website

[www.pancreaticcancer.net.au/afpacc/Request-to-join-AFPACC](http://www.pancreaticcancer.net.au/afpacc/Request-to-join-AFPACC)

- Send an email to [screening@pancreaticcancer.net.au](mailto:screening@pancreaticcancer.net.au)



## Circulating DNA Study

Could tiny particles of tumour DNA floating in the blood be used one day to detect and analyse pancreatic cancer?

Our circulating DNA study has been launched to try and find out. Research has shown that everybody has detectable levels of DNA circulating in their blood and the levels are higher in patients with cancer.

In the future, we may be able to assess the effectiveness of different treatments for pancreatic cancer with a simple blood test. In other words, circulating tumour DNA may be used as a personalised biomarker (detectable molecule in the blood) to monitor the disease status of patients with pancreatic cancer.

To learn more about this study visit  
[www.bit.ly/DNA-project](http://www.bit.ly/DNA-project)