



# KELOWNA PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT & AWARENESS GROUP

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**L**ast month the Kelowna Prostate Cancer Support & Awareness Group was able to hold the first in person meeting in 21/2 years, it was great to see some familiar faces again and to also welcome some newcomers to our support group.

Something that I forgot to mention and comment on was that September is National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.

On Saturday Sept. 17 & Sunday Sept. 18, I was able to take part in a National Virtual Prostate Cancer Conference, that was held over Zoom and included attendees from across Canada. The Saturday meeting was primarily for support group facilitators, and anyone interested in prostate cancer support leadership. The speakers spoke on leadership training, education, and networking.

The meeting on Sunday featured top research scientists, and healthcare professionals from across Canada. A couple of the featured speakers were Radiation Oncologist Dr. Juanita Crook from BC Cancer Kelowna, who together with Urologist Dr. Neil Dwyer from New Brunswick answered the most asked questions from those in attendance, as well as from some questions that were submitted prior to the conference.

## **With just a Tablespoon of blood, Researchers Aim to Transform Cancer Treatment**

The following information was obtained from the Internet and published by *Science Daily* on July 20, 2022, the source of the information originated with the University of BC, with additional information that was obtained from the BC Cancer website.

**R**esearchers at the Vancouver Prostate Centre at VGH have developed a new blood test that provides unprecedented insight into a patient's cancer make-up, potentially allowing doctors to better select treatment options that will improve patient outcomes.

The first-of-its-kind blood test analyzes the DNA that metastatic cancers shed in the bloodstream, known as ***circulating tumour DNA*** or ***ctDNA***. By sequencing the entire genome of this ctDNA, the test reveals characteristics that are unique to each patient's cancer, giving physicians new tools to develop personalized treatment plans

"With just a few drops of blood, we can uncover critical information about a person's overall disease and how best to manage their cancer," says Dr. Alexander Wyatt, an assistant professor of urologic sciences at the University of British Columbia (UBC) and research scientist with the Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute (VCHR) and BC Cancer. "This test has the potential to help clinicians choose better tailored treatment options and to more efficiently detect treatment resistance, allowing clinicians to adjust clinical care as needed."

For the study, which was funded in part through donations to the VGH and UBC Hospital Foundation and BC Cancer Foundation, the researchers examined ctDNA samples collected from patients with metastatic prostate cancer. Metastatic cancer – cancer that has spread to other organs in the body – is not often curable, and chemotherapy and newer targeted therapies may not work for all patients. Biopsies to help determine the best treatments for this type of cancer are rarely performed due to their invasive nature and the high risk of

complications. This is often a major barrier in studying and treating this disease.

The researchers discovered that whole genome sequencing ctDNA, conducted at the Michael Smith Genome Sciences Centre, provides a host of information about the different metastases spread throughout the body. Using newly developed computer programs, the researchers were able to pinpoint the unique genetic make-up of various populations in the body to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the disease.

"Metastatic cancers are complex and our understanding of them has been limited," says Dr. Wyatt. "Whereas traditional biopsies only provide a small snapshot of the disease, this new test is able to paint a more complete picture of metastases throughout the body, all from a simple and easy to perform blood test."

The researchers say the information can also be used to help predict which treatments will be effective or ineffective in each patient.

"Every cancer is unique, and every patient responds differently to treatment," says Dr. Wyatt. "This new generation of ctDNA tests can help clinicians choose the best treatment option that is most likely to benefit the patient."

## **New insights into treatment resistance –**

While the number of cancer treatment options has expanded in recent years, a common problem is that eventually those treatments stop working. Drug resistance can develop over time as cancer cells accumulate molecular changes that make them less sensitive to a particular drug or treatment.

The study, co-led by Dr. Kim Chi, medical oncologist and chief medical officer at BC Cancer, senior research scientist at the Vancouver Prostate Centre and a professor in the Department of Medicine at UBC, sheds new light on how this resistance develops. By collecting multiple ctDNA samples over time, they were able to learn how cancer evolves in response to treatment. The findings revealed new genetic mechanisms of resistance to the most common drugs for treating metastatic prostate cancer and more broadly demonstrates how ctDNA profiling can be used to understand treatment resistance across other types of cancers.

“This technology can be applied across other types of cancer to understand how those tumours metastasize and how they eventually evade treatment,” says Dr. Wyatt. “It will also help us design the next generation of cancer therapies that more effectively target resistant disease.”

The researchers say that this minimally-invasive, relatively inexpensive and highly-scalable technology is now being deployed

across clinical trials. This includes leading-edge precision oncology clinical trials in Canadian cancer patients being conducted at BC Cancer and the Vancouver Prostate Centre.

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## **WITT'S WIT (ON THE LIGHTER SIDE) -**

This morning at about 7:45, I was in a long line at the grocery store that opens at 8:00 for senior citizens only.

A young man came from the parking lot and tried to cut in at the front of the line, but an old lady beat him back into the parking lot with her cane.

He returned and tried to cut in again, but an old man punched him in the gut, then kicked him to the ground and rolled him away.

As he approached the line for the third time he said, **“Look if you don't let me unlock the damn door you're never going to get in there”**

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| <b>Clinical Update on ESSA Pharma's EPI- 7386 –</b> |
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The following information is a brief excerpt of information obtained from several Internet sources.

“We are pleased with the progress in advancing our novel prostate cancer candidate EPI-7386 as a monotherapy in patients with advanced *Metastatic Castration Resistant Prostate Cancer*

(mCRPC). EPI-7386's favorable safety and tolerability profile, good pharmaceutical characteristics together with both antiandrogen biological and anti-tumor activity support our decision to move together with both antiandrogen biological and anti-tumor activity support our decision to move into earlier lines of therapy and, more importantly, study EPI-7386 in combination with second-generation antiandrogens," said Dr. David R. Parkinson, President and Chief Executive Officer of ESSA Pharma Inc. "Further, ctDNA molecular analysis in this heavily pretreated population has given us a detailed profile of genetic alterations, revealing the biological complexity of late-stage mCRPC patients but also allowing us to continue to refine the population of prostate cancer patients whose tumors are still primarily driven by the androgen receptor and therefore most likely to respond to an androgen receptor inhibitor."

*Key Response findings in both QD (once a day) and BID (twice a day) patients as of June 1, 2022 –*

- In five patients who had measurable disease and were on therapy for more than 12 weeks, tumor volume decreased in all five patients.
- PSA decreases or PSA stabilization was observed in a clinical subset of patients with no visceral disease.

The company expects to initiate the Phase 1b monotherapy expansion study in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2022 and will plan to enroll two dose cohorts into this study following recent guidance from the FDA from Project Optimus.

The Kelowna Prostate Cancer Support & Awareness group does not recommend treatment modalities or physicians: However, all information is fully shared and is confidential. The information contained in this newsletter is not intended to replace the services of your health professionals regarding matters of your personal health.

The Kelowna Prostate Cancer Support & Awareness Group would like to thank Janssen - and TerSera for their support and educational grants that go towards our newsletters and our support group.



#### **UP COMING MEETING DATES FOR 2022 –**

**Nov. 12<sup>th</sup> – Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Meeting Location:**

Our meetings take place in the Harvest Room at Trinity Church located at the corner of Springfield Road and Spall Road. Please enter through the South Entrance off the main parking lot and follow the signs upstairs to the Harvest Room. Our meetings begin at 9:00 A.M. and the doors open at 8:30 A.M. There is elevator access if needed.

**NOTE:** Many of our past newsletters are available for viewing and printing through our website. – [www.kelownaprostate.com](http://www.kelownaprostate.com)

- A big *Thank You to Doris at Affordable Web Design for all her work on our website.*