



IUSCC news

June 2014

IU study: Increased number of moles may indicate higher breast cancer risk for women

An Indiana University cancer researcher and colleagues have found that the number of moles on a woman's body might predict her risk of developing breast cancer.



Han

Jiali Han, PhD, the Rachel Cecile Efroymson Professor in Cancer Research at the Indiana University Melvin and Bren Simon Cancer Center and professor and inaugural chair of the Department of Epidemiology at the Fairbanks School of Public Health, and colleagues found that women with 15 or more cutaneous nevi, or moles, were 35 percent more likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer than women with no nevi.

The findings were published online June 10 in *PLOS Medicine*.

Dr. Han is an epidemiologist and a melanoma (skin cancer) expert. The more moles a person has is a known risk factor for developing melanoma, but this new research indicates a high count of moles may also be a factor in a woman's risk of developing breast cancer.

"We found that a higher count of moles also indicates higher levels of sex hormones," Dr. Han said. "Higher levels of hormones have been attributed to increased risk of developing breast cancer. Therefore, it's possible that the number of moles might be used as a marker for breast cancer risk."

The researchers used data from 74,523 white, female nurses who participated in the Nurses' Health Study. Dr. Han used data from the women who had reported the number of nevi less than 3 millimeters in diameter on their left arms from 1986 to 2010.

Dr. Han cautioned that additional studies need to be conducted to study the relationship between cutaneous nevi and breast cancer risk, especially in other populations, as this study focused only on white women.

"There is much yet that we need to investigate to gain a better understanding of this relationship," Dr. Han said. "We are seeking research funding to support our work because we next want to examine whether the mole count

can improve the current breast cancer risk prediction model.”

Other authors of the study included Mingfeng Zhang, Xuehong Zhang and A. Heather Eliassen of Brigham and Women’s Hospital and Harvard Medical School; Abrar A. Qureshi of Brown University; and Susan E. Hankinson of the University of Massachusetts.

Helpful Links

[Member Directory](#) | [Shared Facilities](#) | [Funding Opportunities](#) | [Research Programs](#)



News briefs

IU Simon Cancer Center seeks applicants for new Vera Bradley Foundation Scholars program

The IU Simon Cancer Center is seeking applicants for the new Vera Bradley Foundation Scholars program. It provides funding for two years to junior breast cancer scientists. [full story>](#)

IU cancer researcher earns Conquer Cancer Foundation grant

An Indiana University cancer researcher has been awarded a \$200,000 grant from the Conquer Cancer Foundation of the American Society of Clinical Oncology.

Costantine Albany, MD, is among nine recipients of the foundation's Career Development Award. The three-year award provides funding to clinical investigators who have recently received a faculty appointment at an academic center to perform patient-oriented cancer research.

Dr. Albany is studying whether the drug SGI-110 makes resistant testis cancer respond again to cisplatin chemotherapy. Metastatic testis cancer is highly curable with the use of a combination of chemotherapy drugs that contains a drug called cisplatin. However, about 10 percent to 20 percent of metastatic testis cancers are resistant to cisplatin chemotherapy. Dr. Albany's work has the potential to change resistant incurable testis cancer to a curable disease.

Dr. Albany's primary expertise is in testicular cancer and prostate cancer. His research focuses on identifying new therapeutic targets.





Costantine Albany, MD, (right) proudly displays his Career Development Award with his mentor, Lawrence Einhorn, MD.

Cancer center members serving as summer mentors

The research labs are filled again this summer with high school and college students as they gain hands-on experiences with IU Simon Cancer Center researchers. Eleven students are participating in the Summer Research Program (SRP), which aims to increase the number of high school and undergraduate students from underrepresented populations pursuing biomedical and behavioral science careers by providing positive and meaningful firsthand exposure to these fields. The following cancer center members are serving as mentors: **Murray Korc, MD; Janaiah Kota, PhD; Marc Mendonca, PhD; Khalid Mohammad, MD, PhD; Sami Naidu, PhD; Christie Orschell, PhD; Clark Wells, PhD; J.T. Zhang, PhD; Baohua Zhou, PhD; and Teresa Zimmers, PhD.**

Meet the Hester Fellowship recipients



Gehlhausen, Sharma

Two IU School of Medicine students interested in pursuing careers in pediatric oncology research are recipients of the Indiana University Melvin and Bren Simon Cancer Center's Marilyn Hester Fellowship for the upcoming 2014-15 academic year. The award supports students pursuing MD or MD/PhD degrees in the medical sciences. [Meet the recipients](#), Jeff Gehlhausen and Richa Sharma.

Indiana CTSI launches multi-state consortium to spark translational medicine collaborations

A research institute centered at the IU School of Medicine has launched a new organization to spark innovative collaborations across academic research centers and the biopharmaceutical industry. The program, called the Strategic Pharma-Academic Research Consortium for Translational Medicine (SPARC), has been established by the Indiana Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute, a \$60 million National Institutes of Health-funded collaboration among IU, Purdue University, and the University of Notre Dame. Inaugural members include the Indiana CTSI and several universities with

academic medical centers also supported by NIH Clinical and Translational Science Awards and Eli Lilly and Co. and Takeda Pharmaceuticals International Inc.

[full story](#) >

Middle school students meet researchers

A group of students from Harshman Magnet Middle School met with IU Simon Cancer Center researchers in late May as a reward for raising money for the Indiana Chapter of The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS). The students raised \$1,756, which supports research, patient services, education programs and advocacy related to leukemia and lymphoma. The students spent time in the lab of **Randy Brutkiewicz**, PhD. They also got the chance to visit a cancer clinic with **Attaya Suvannasankha**, MD, who talked about cancer treatment options and shared how her education led to a career as an oncologist. This is the second time The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society offered a special, hands-on field trip to the IU School of Medicine. The trip was open to any middle or high school whose students raised more than \$1,500 through LLS's Pennies for Patients fund drive during the 2013-14 school year. This year's winning school was selected at random from a pool of qualified participants. Each year, more than 500 Indiana schools participate in the Pennies for Patients fundraiser. This year's campaign has raised more than \$500,000 from Indiana schools and \$27 million from across the country.



A shower of pink and white confetti falls as a record-breaking dollar amount raised during the 21st annual Vera Bradley Foundation for Breast Cancer Classic is revealed. Held in early June, the classic -- the largest amateur women's golf and tennis tournament in the United States -- raised \$1,083,629, which supports breast cancer research at the IU Simon Cancer Center. Vera Bradley's total giving to the cancer center has topped more than \$21 million.

Two-day NCI symposium focuses on immunology, immunotherapy

The Center for Cancer Research at the National Cancer Institute is hosting a two-day national symposium Oct. 9-10 entitled "Cancer Immunology and Immunotherapy: Delivering the Promise." The program includes recent advances in the field and provides a forum for discussion and debate on the current understanding on the immunotherapy of cancer. Registration is now open and abstracts are being accepted for the poster session. Deadline for abstract submission is Aug. 15. Registration is free, but seating is limited, so be sure to register early. The full meeting program, online registration and

instructions for abstract submission can be found at
<http://ncifrederick.cancer.gov/events/CancerImmunology/default.asp>.

24 Hours of Booty returns

24 Hours of Booty is back for a third year in Indianapolis at Butler University June 27-28. The cancer center's team, Pedaling Cures, will once again ride to raise awareness and funds for cancer research. Proceeds benefit Livestrong and the IU Simon Cancer Center. Last year, Pedaling Cures rode a total of 3,517 miles and raised \$11,155. **Eddy**



Srour, PhD, is the team captain. For more information, check out www.24hoursofbooty.org.

Save the date: Palliative care symposium set for Nov. 17-18

On Nov. 17-18, 2014, the IU Simon Cancer Center's Mary Margaret Walther Program in Palliative Care Research and Education will host a two-day symposium entitled, "Passages and Promises: Innovations in Palliative Care Research Education and Practice." The focus of the symposium is on research for improving communication among patients, family members, and clinicians in the context of advanced cancer.

Acclaimed authors Gail Sheehy and Mark Nepo will join national palliative care experts Robert Arnold, Amber Barnato, Vicki Jackson, and Timothy Quill and local faculty on the first day for a series of plenary talks, workshops and small-group discussions exploring the latest innovations in care for those at end of life. The second day will consist of a "think tank" for a small number of local investigators who will partner with the national experts in developing pilot project proposals, a limited number of which will be funded for up to \$50,000 by the Walther program.

Details about the symposium and the investigator application – which are due July 18 – will be forthcoming. Please contact Mary Lynn Hoffmann at hoffmaml@iu.edu for more information and questions.

Cancer center members in the news

Debra Burns, PhD, and **Sheri Robb**, PhD, recently were featured speakers during the Music Therapy Research in Oncology: Therapeutic Outcomes, Mechanisms, and Directions for Future Research meeting. [full story >](#)

The following presented at the Indiana-Illinois End Epithelial Ovarian Cancer Coalition Workshop Program at the University of Norte Dame in early June:

- **Yan Xu**, PhD, "Co-Targeting the PI3K and Rho Pathways"
- **Daniela Matei**, MD, "Tissue Transglutaminase-2/ β Integrin Complexes as a Target in Ovarian Cancer"
- **Sharon Stack**, PhD, University of Notre Dame, "Does Obesity Impact Ovarian Cancer Metastatic Success?"

The following presented at the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) annual meeting in Chicago. ASCO is the world's leading professional organization representing physicians who care for people with cancer.

- **Costantine Albany**, MD, presented "Phase II study of fosaprepitant plus 5HT3 receptor antagonists plus dexamethasone in patients with germ cell tumors undergoing 5-day cisplatin-based chemotherapy: Hoosier Oncology Group QL12-153" in a general poster session.
- **Sunil Badve**, MBBS, MD, presented "A proprietary multi-analyte test to predict neoadjuvant treatment response for esophageal and rectal adenocarcinoma"

patients” in a general poster session.

- **Shadia Jalal**, MD, presented “Final results of a phase I study of amrubicin and cyclophosphamide in patients with advanced solid organ malignancies: HOG LUN 07-130” in a general poster session.
- **Ted Logan**, MD, presented “PET/CT assessment of tumor perfusion in metastatic renal cell carcinoma (RCC) before and during sunitinib: A comparison of 15O-water with 62Cu-ETS” in a general poster session.
- **Kathy Miller**, MD, presented “Bevacizumab (Bv) in the adjuvant treatment of HER2-negative breast cancer: Final results from Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group E5103” in an oral abstract session.
- **Milan Radovich**, PhD, presented “RNA-sequencing of residual triple-negative breast cancers after neoadjuvant chemotherapy compared to matched pretreatment biopsies from the Hoosier Oncology Group trial BRE09-146” in an oral abstract session.

New member

Beth Meyerson, PhD

IU School of Public Health, Bloomington

Associate member, [Cancer Prevention and Control](#)

Helpful Links

[Member Directory](#) | [Shared Facilities](#) | [Funding Opportunities](#) | [Research Programs](#)