



LUSTGARTEN FOUNDATION FUNDED RESEARCH FINDS T CELL PROXIMITY TO PANCREATIC CANCER CELLS CORRELATES WITH INCREASED PATIENT SURVIVAL

Findings reinforce the importance of immunotherapy research

BETHPAGE, N.Y., May 1, 2017 – Lustgarten Foundation’s funded research found that spatial distribution of cytotoxic T-cells in proximity to pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma (PDAC) cancer cells correlates with increased patient survival.

Desmoplasia, the growth of fibrous or connective tissue, causes dense fibrosis around the tumor making it difficult to treat the cancer. It has been hypothesized that desmoplastic materials create an impenetrable environment and drive T lymphocytes away from cancer cells, which are necessary for the body’s immune response. Dr. James P. Allison and Dr. Raghu Kalluri, of The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, developed computational imaging technology to evaluate this microenvironment. Their early outcomes with T-cell vaccines provided evidence that T cells can infiltrate the desmoplastic fibrotic stroma surrounding the PDAC tumor, resulting in improved rates of survival for pancreatic cancer patients.

“Dr Kalluri’s work demonstrates that increased T cells deep into the tumors of patients is associated with better outcomes, and supports the strategic investment the Lustgarten Foundation is making in immunotherapy approaches for pancreatic cancer patients. This includes work by our Distinguished Scholar Dr. Doug Fearon, as well as several projects co-supported with Stand Up to Cancer,” said David Tuveson, M.D., Ph.D., Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory and Lustgarten Foundation Distinguished Scholar.

Further studies evaluating the complex relationship between desmoplasia and T-cell infiltration could potentially impact the optimization of immunotherapy for PDAC patients.

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About the Lustgarten Foundation

The Lustgarten Foundation is America's largest private foundation dedicated to funding pancreatic cancer research. Based in Bethpage, N.Y., the Foundation supports research to find a cure for pancreatic cancer, facilitates dialogue within the medical and scientific community, and educates the public about the disease through awareness campaigns and fundraising events. Since its inception, the Lustgarten Foundation has directed \$132 million to research and assembled the best scientific minds with the hope that one day, a cure can be found. Thanks to private funding, 100 percent of every dollar donated to the Foundation goes directly to pancreatic cancer research. For more information, please visit www.lustgarten.org.

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