



The mission of Simmons Cancer Institute at SIU is to serve the people of central and southern Illinois by addressing their present and future cancer care needs through medical education, biomedical research, patient care and community service.

TODAY'S NEWS

BREAST CANCER PREVENTION: ANOTHER TOOL IN THE BOX



Dr. Robert S. Mocharnuk Associate Professor of Hematology/Oncology

At the recent 2011 American Cancer Society Meeting, Dr. Paul Goss from Harvard Medical School presented results from a randomized study, indicating that the use of the drug, exemestane that lowers the amount of estrogen in the body, may prevent breast cancer from ever developing in a substantial proportion of post-menopausal women at high risk for the disease.

The trial enrolled 4,560 women at high risk for developing breast cancer. Included in that group were those 60 and older, those with a previous history of atypical breast cells on biopsy, those with non-invasive cancers known as in situ disease, and those with elevated Gail model scores. The Gail model risk calculator is a tool commonly used to determine an individual's lifetime breast cancer risk. Overall, 11 women assigned to the exemestane group developed invasive breast cancer after three years, compared with 32 women in the placebo group, a 65 percent reduction in the incidence of breast cancer at three-years of follow-up. Moreover, the breast cancers in the exemestane group tended to be less aggressive than those in the placebo group. Exemestane also reduced the incidence risk of developing non-invasive cancer.

Women who took exemestane did not experience an increased incidence of serious side effects, unlike tamoxifen and raloxifene, the other two drugs currently approved for breast cancer prevention. While the incidence of osteoporosis, bone fractures and cardiac events was the same in those taking placebo, there was a non-statistical increase in the incidence of hot flashes and joint pains in the exemestane group. Even though it is not statistically correct to compare outcomes between different clinical studies, it appears that the benefit of exemestane

in breast cancer prevention may far exceed the benefits of both tamoxifen and raloxifene, which have been shown to reduce a woman's risk of developing breast cancer by 50% and 38%, respectively.

Dr. Goss acknowledged that the study's three-year follow-up period may not be long enough to determine if there are serious side effects associated with use of exemestane. He also cautions that clinicians should not apply data from studies in which exemestane was used for treatment of invasive breast cancer to women taking exemestane for breast cancer prevention. However, if the side effects prove to be tolerable, as expected they will be, the number of women at high risk for breast cancer who will take exemestane may easily exceed the current number of women taking either tamoxifen or raloxifene. The side effect profiles of both tamoxifen and raloxifene have been cited as the #1 reason why only one percent of women are currently taking either therapy for breast cancer prevention.

It will be the job of primary care physicians to prescribe exemestane, but oncologists will likely be involved in educating the primary care providers. The excitement generated by these data has created a buzz in the oncology community because of the huge number of women that could benefit from this drug. Selective use of exemestane in the prevention of breast cancer might be as important as banning cigarettes in the prevention of lung cancer.



KERR PRESENTS \$5,000 FOR CANCER RESEARCH TO SIMMONS CANCER INSTITUTE AT SIU

LPGA State Farm Classic 2010 Champion Cristie Kerr presented a check for \$5,000 to Simmons Cancer Institute at SIU in coordination with her signature wine label 'Curvature.' The donation provides funding for cancer research and was given in addition to the funds SCI will receive from the State Farm Classic as a charitable partner.

Kerr has committed her career to the cause of developing a cure for breast cancer. Her mother, aunt and godmother have battled the disease. "Breast cancer is a disease that touches everyone in some way. The advancements in medicine are continuously evolving and I am fortunate to have the opportunity to help support the effort to find a cure," Kerr said. "Simmons Cancer Institute at SIU does fantastic work and I'm proud to support their efforts."



K. Thomas Robbins, Cristie Kerr & Sara Howe

"The advancements in medicine are continuously evolving and I am fortunate to have the opportunity to help support the effort to find a cure," –LPGA State Farm Classic 2010 Champion, Cristie Kerr

SCI will use the funds it receives from the LPGA to purchase supplies for its **Just for You Salon** that provides free services to breast cancer patients throughout 70 downstate counties. The additional funds donated by Kerr will be used for cancer research.

"Cristie Kerr's generous contribution will fund our ongoing research to fight breast cancer. Her many efforts have raised awareness and increased education about this disease, so we are very appreciative of her support and advocacy," said Dr. K. Thomas Robbins, SCI director.



Morgan Pressel, Lisa Van Ravenswaay & Juli Inkster

Photos by Robert Pope

What's Happening

TWO PRO-PATIENT PROPOSALS PASS THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State legislators passed two proposals this spring that would help cancer patients with insurance issues regarding coverage for cancer clinical trials and for oral chemotherapy medication.

Dr. K. Thomas Robbins, director of Simmons Cancer Institute, Dr. John Godwin, associate director and Dr. Robert Mocharnuk all testified in legislative committees in support of these measures.

House Bill 1191 would require health insurance providers to cover routine patient costs if the patient is enrolled in a qualified cancer clinical trial.

House Bill 1825 would require private health insurance plans that currently provide coverage for oral chemotherapy and IV chemotherapy to cover oral chemotherapy at the same benefit.

The two measures have been approved by the Governor and are effective January 1, 2012.

EXERCISE STUDY PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

Dr. Laura Q. Rogers is looking for women with breast cancer and breast cancer survivors to participate in two research projects she has underway. Both studies involve exercise; one evaluating exercise adherence after breast cancer treatment and the other looking at how persons who are fatigued or don't sleep well are affected when they begin to exercise.

She is specifically looking for individuals who are not already exercising to participate in the study. Participants must be between the ages of 18 and 70 with a history of DCIS, Stage I, II or IIIA breast cancer. Studies require travel to Springfield or Champaign-Urbana depending on site of enrollment. If you would like to know more about either of the research projects, please contact Dr. Rogers' office at 217.545.0592 or 217.545.7750 or contact the research team at BEATCancer@siumed.edu.

NEW HPV-RELATED CANCER TREATMENT STUDIED AT SIMMONS CANCER INSTITUTE

A new treatment study is available for Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) - positive oral cancer patients. St. John's Hospital and the Head and Neck Oncology Team (HANOT) at Simmons Cancer Institute at SIU are currently enrolling patients in the protocol.

It's hypothesized that HPV-positive oral cancer patients benefit more from a biologic agent, cetuximab, given concurrently with radiotherapy than those who do not have the HPV disease.

The Radiation Therapy Oncology Group (RTOG) recently began a study which randomly assigns patients with locally advanced (stages III-IVB) HPV-positive oral cancer to either standard chemoradiation or "bioradiation" with cetuximab given with radiotherapy in order to compare outcomes and toxicities of the two treatments.

RTOG aims to show that targeted bioradiation will substantially reduce acute treatment-related toxicity, resulting in faster recovery and return to function, lower rates of late effects, with similar rates of long-term survival, compared to conventional chemoradiation.

Questions regarding this protocol and other RTOG protocols available in the Springfield area can be answered by Diana Weyhenmeyer, Clinical Facilitator at 217.544.6464 Ext. 45591.

HPV contributes to the development of several oral cancers; most notably cancer of the tonsils, base tongue, and soft palate. Currently in the United States, HPV-associated cancer represents about 60% of these cancer cases compared with 40% in the previous decade. This increased incidence of HPV-associated oral cancer is also seen in other countries.

Evidence suggests the HPV is the main cause of oral cancers in non-smokers and non-drinkers. Tobacco and/or alcohol use may contribute to increase the risk of HPV-positive oral cancer. Patients with the HPV cancers tend to be younger than those with oral cancer who do not have the virus. HPV-oral cancer is usually diagnosed at a more advanced stage than other types of oral cancers.

Tumor HPV status is strongly associated with a positive therapeutic response and survival. HPV cancers have an estimated 50% reduction in risk of death when compared to oral cancer patients with HPV-negative tumors.



ASK THE PHARMACIST

I just recently started an oral chemotherapy treatment. I have been told that certain fruits can cause problems with my medication. Do I need to stop eating fruit?

Every medication is different. It may have different side effects and interactions. In addition, every person is different. While fruit may or may not be a good choice for you depending on your meal plan, it is actually grapefruit and grapefruit products to be careful with. Grapefruit and grapefruit juice may affect how your chemotherapy medications work. Talk to your pharmacist about your medication and your meal plan to determine whether grapefruit is ok for you.

My medication makes me sick to my stomach and I don't feel like eating. How can I eat when I feel like this?

Nausea is feeling queasy or sick to your stomach and it sometimes results in vomiting. Changes in appetite and weight loss could affect your health and interfere with your treatment, so eating is definitely important. Try eating smaller meals frequently throughout the day versus three large meals. Eat slowly and chew thoroughly. Talk with your doctor and healthcare team to determine the best meal plan for you. There are also anti-nausea medications and other treatments that may be available to you.

*Don't forget to ask your pharmacist your questions!

Heather Sucech, Pharm D
Walgreens Pharmacist, Baylis Building

COMMUNITY EVENTS



September 29, 5pm-8pm – Regional Cancer Partnership Community Prostate Screening, Union Baptist Church, Springfield, To register call 217.545.7390

October 14 - SIU School of Medicine: Lunch with the Doctor on Breast Cancer, Dove Conference Center, Springfield, call, 217.545.7133

October 15 - Be Aware, Women's Fair – MMC Breast Cancer Event, "A Day Devoted to your Physical, Emotional and Financial Health, Jacksonville, call 217.245.4668

October 15 - ACS Strides Against Cancer – Orr Building, Fairgrounds, Springfield, call 217.523.4503

SAVE THE DATE

SIU MEN'S NIGHT OUT

SPONSORED BY SIMMONS CANCER INSTITUTE AT SIU

SEPTEMBER 22, 2011

featuring
St. Louis Cardinal Legends
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Tickets are \$15 and are available August 15

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or call **217.545.7133**

Men must be 21 years of age to attend

SIU School of Medicine
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SAVE THE DATE



SIMMONS
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PRESENTS

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BENEFITING

SIMMONS CANCER INSTITUTE AT SIU

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2011

CROWNE PLAZA SPRINGFIELD

DINNER, SILENT AND LIVE AUCTIONS, ENTERTAINMENT

FOR TICKET INFORMATION OR
SPONSOR OPPORTUNITIES, CALL
217.545.0395



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