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**PROSTATE
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Association

TPSA is registered with the Charity Commissioners as Number 1095734

Serving men of all ages, and their partners, through a program of support before, during and after diagnosis

Newsletter Winter 2011 Issue No. 26

Chairman's Report

Greetings yet again to everyone – how the time flies. Let us pray that the Spring and Summer months will be kinder to us all than the hard Winter we have all experienced.

Our Members Meeting in late January was very successful, especially the talk given by Paula Vasco-Knight which was most enjoyable and informative. The Hospital Chief Executive very thoroughly outlined the recent Hospital achievements and their plans all very absorbing. Members' questions were wide ranging which Paula fielded with great dexterity and professionalism. Congratulations Paula – you won our hearts.

The next talk is by one of our very own Urology Consultants – Mr Robert Mason. Robert will be bringing us up to date with the latest developments in the Prostate Cancer field and which as always has affected so many men throughout the UK. We look forward to your talk.

Robert is to visit Uganda shortly (even by the time you read this) to perform 14/20 operations until his funds run out and I am hoping we may assist financially with a modest donation to raise £700 specifically for this purpose. I respectfully request members to donate cash (with the Gift Aid form) to cover this aspect of the trip – bearing in mind he has done so much for us as individuals. Each operation will cost £45, unlike this country where it would cost at least 10 times that amount. Please forward your donation to me direct making your cheque payable to TPSA.

We have two other projects we are planning and we expect to outline these at our next meeting. The venue for that meeting is to be again at the Livermead House Hotel, Torquay. Please support Mr Mason by attending and learn something to your advantage and pose your questions to which he will be more than happy to respond. At that meeting he will have returned from Uganda and be able to tell us just what he has achieved.

A poster is enclosed with the Newsletter with all the details. Please display it as publicly as possible in your own church halls, libraries and surgeries. We look forward to seeing you all very soon.

We now have a new Treasurer. Darrell Fulford has stepped forward to become a Trustee and take on the role as Treasurer. He is most welcome and we are very confident that he will do an excellent job and at the same time relieve the Chairman of one of his responsibilities. Thank you Darrell.

At the same time we regret to advise you all that we have reluctantly said goodbye to Vernon Hiles who, due to ill health and personal reasons, has relinquished his post as Trustee and Secretary. He has acquitted himself so well in that post since the TPSA was formed and has been a staunch supporter in all our activities from the outset. Thank you Vernon – enjoy your retirement.

We are now looking for a Secretary – any volunteers.

Most of us who have been diagnosed with prostate cancer keep our eyes open for news of new types of treatment that are being tried out. We also like to look out at any research that is being done. Here are a couple of items that I discovered on the web site of Northwestern University, Chicago.

Interesting reading!

Soy May Stop Prostate Cancer Spread

By Raymond Bergan, MD, Director of Experimental Therapeutics

Experimental soy-based drug shows benefits in men with localized prostate cancer

Northwestern Medicine researchers at the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Centre of Northwestern University have found that a new, nontoxic drug made from a chemical in soy could prevent the movement of cancer cells from the prostate to the rest of the body.

These findings will be presented at the Ninth Annual American Association for Cancer Research Frontiers in Cancer Prevention Research Conference.

Genistein, a natural chemical found in soy, is being used in the lab of Raymond Bergan, MD, Director of Experimental Therapeutics at the Lurie Cancer Centre, to inhibit prostate cancer cells from becoming metastatic and spreading to other parts of the body. So far the cancer therapy drug has worked in preclinical animal studies and now shows benefits in humans with prostate cancer.

A recent phase II randomized study of 38 men with localized prostate cancer found that genistein, when given once a day as a pill, one month prior to surgery, had beneficial effects on prostate cancer cells.

Researchers examined the cancer cells from the subjects' prostates after surgery and found that genistein increased the expression of genes that suppress the invasion of cancer cells and decreased the expression of genes that enhance invasion.

"The first step is to see if the drug has the effect that you want on the cells and the prostate, and the answer is 'yes, it does,'" said Professor Bergan, a physician at Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

The next step is to conduct another phase II study to see if the drug can stop the cancer cells from moving out of the prostate and into the rest of the body, Bergan said. If confirmed, Bergan said this could be the first therapy for any cancer that is non-toxic and targets and inhibits cancer cell movement.

"All therapies designed to stop cancer cell movement that have been tested to date in humans have basically failed because they have been ineffective or toxic," Bergan said. "If this drug can effectively stop prostate cancer from moving in the body, theoretically, a similar therapy could have the same effect on the cells of other cancers."

There is another article originating from the Northwestern Web site, inside the back cover .

Their web site address is: www.northwestern.edu/

NORTHWESTERN MBAS ASSESS NEW ANTI-CANCER COMPOUND

By Brad Stanger, Medill School

The moment of truth is coming for a brand new class of anti-prostate cancer drugs under development at Northwestern, a go-no go decision as to whether the novel compound is worth further investment in terms of time and money.

A team of four MBA students from Northwestern's Kellogg business school with two more experienced advisors huddled for three-plus hours on an August Saturday morning. For this exercise they weren't students or administrators; they were consultants, deciding the commercial fate of what might be breakthrough life science research.

The students: Grace Kang, Cecil Brown, Robert Serrano and Michael Apostal, and staff from Northwestern's technology transfer operations, Marta Melar-New and Jim Bray, discussed at length a collaborative endeavour between Medical School cancer biologist, Ray Bergan, and University chemist, Karl Scheidt.

The MBAs came away feeling good about the compound's potential. Apostal said there might be more than one drug to make out of it, "If you can prove efficacy and lack of toxicity then this therapeutic essentially prevents the metastasis of prostate cancer cells to move throughout the body," and then you could potentially have a drug for breast cancer cells as well.

It was Professor Bergan who began the investigation that led to the compound's creation with a simple question, why is the incidence of prostate cancer so much lower in Japan than in other parts of the world, and might it be as a result of something in their diet?

Bergan isolated a known compound called genistein, found in soy (a major component of the typical Japanese diet), and discovered that it halted the spread of prostate cancer in 96% of mice tested.

Together, biologist Bergan and chemist Scheidt worked to take the cancer lockdown effect found in genistein, and put it into an analogous compound, one suited to becoming a drug people could take.

The effort succeeded and the two had a promising drug candidate, but initial tests identified side effects (liver toxicity and hormone disruption) that meant the compound in that formulation could never actually be a drug.

What the MBAs gave up a chunk of their weekend to consider was whether this second-generation compound from the Northwestern researchers was a worthwhile investment now that it been tweaked to potentially reduce or eliminate side effects (through Scheidt's molecular design) and known to possess the same anti-cancer properties as their first try (through studies in mice).

Consensus was that, yes, this was something to push forward with, but cautiously.

Serrano voiced the risks, saying that they have work still to do to get to where they can apply for definitive market-ready drug testing with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Bergan and Scheidt are, according to Serrano, "excited about it and they think they're on the right track."

"There are synergies in [the scientists' joint] work that could really benefit patients," says Melar-New, who's the Northwestern administrator responsible for connecting the MBAs and the scientists through a program called I2C Consulting Services. I2C is short for Innovation-to-Commercialization.

The MBAs come up with the roadmap that gives the researcher's technology a chance to get to the cancer patients they're working to help, says Melar-New, "We're hoping to increase the amount of critical thinking at every stage of development."

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Can I fill this empty space with your name?

We STILL urgently need help to run the Association

Have you visited our web site yet?

www.TPSA.org.uk

We are always looking for willing helpers. Anyone who wishes to volunteer should contact one of the above Trustees

Could you spare just 2-3 hours per month to take on the very important role of Secretary?

Disclaimer: The information and opinions expressed in this Newsletter are not an endorsement or recommendation by the TPSA or the Editor for any medical treatment, product, service or course of action.

For medical, legal or other advice, please consult appropriate professionals of your choice.

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