



October 2012

## IUSCC researcher receives lifetime achievement award from American Pancreatic Association

An Indiana University Melvin and Bren Simon Cancer Center researcher will be honored with a lifetime achievement award for his work in pancreatic cancer.

**Murray Korc**, MD, the Myles Brand Professor of Cancer Research, will receive the Vay Liang and Frisca Go Award for Lifetime Achievement from the American Pancreatic Association on Nov. 1 in Miami.

Recipients are chosen because of their leadership within the association and their service as role models and mentors for future generations of pancreatic researchers and physicians. Also, their accomplishments in the field must have inspired many and continue to stimulate the next generation to do their best work.

“We are thrilled to honor Dr. Korc for his lifetime of achievements,” Ashok K. Saluja, secretary-treasurer of the American Pancreatic Association, said. “He is unquestionably a leader in the field, and moreover, has provided exemplary service to the pancreas community.”



Korc

Dr. Korc, who arrived at Indiana University in October 2011 and also holds the titles of IU professor of medicine and of biochemistry and molecular biology, and his colleagues design strategies for early pancreatic cancer detection, improved prevention and treatment modalities, and meaningful prolongation of pain-free survival.

The Myles Brand Professorship was created to help physicians and scientists at the IU Simon Cancer Center to continue investigating devastating malignancies, such as pancreatic cancer, which claimed the life of Brand, the 16th president of Indiana University. The Brand Professorship funds and encourages research that may one day lead to a cure.

In 2012, an estimated 43,920 new cases of pancreatic cancer are expected in the United States, according to the American Cancer Society. An estimated 37,390 deaths are expected from the disease in 2012.

Dr. Korc’s research has been continuously funded by the National Institutes of Health since 1981. His focus is on aberrant growth-factor signaling in pancreatic cancer and genetic mouse models of pancreatic cancer, with the goal of designing novel therapeutic strategies. He has published more than 270 peer-reviewed manuscripts, and he is internationally recognized for his seminal contributions to the understanding of the role of the EGF receptor and transforming growth factor-beta in pancreatic cancer. That work earned him an NIH MERIT award. The NIH presents the highly-selective MERIT Awards to researchers who demonstrate superior competence and outstanding productivity in research endeavors.



## iuscc research news

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### Core spotlight

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#### Biostatistics & Data Management

The Biostatistics and Data Management Core (BDMC) of the IU Simon Cancer Center has statistical and data management responsibilities as well as related administrative functions, including education, training, and facilitation of the collaborative research effort of cancer center investigators.

Consisting of a group of biostatisticians, data managers, and information technology professionals, the core participates in every level of research, from study planning and monitoring to data analysis and dissemination of results.

Core members collaborate and consult with and participate in virtually every level of research, including the:

- design of experiments
- planning of basic science and clinical protocols
- monitoring and assessment of the progress of pre-clinical and clinical studies
- analysis and interpretation of data
- presentation and dissemination of results

The BDMC services available to IU Simon Cancer Center members include:

- providing broad statistical support
- developing databases and case report forms
- serving as an educational resource
- facilitating communications between the IU Simon Cancer Center, other Indiana University groups, other cancer centers, the NCI, and the scientific community at large

Questions? Contact Susan Perkins, PhD, the core director, at (317) 274-2626 or [sperkin1@iupui.edu](mailto:sperkin1@iupui.edu).



October 2012

## News briefs

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### A Request for Proposals for the American Cancer Society Institutional Research Grant Competition

The IU Simon Cancer Center is pleased to announce the availability of funds for new pilot projects to assist new investigators who hold the rank of assistant professor, research assistant professor, or assistant scientist but without an active, or previous national competitive research grant (i.e., NIH, NSF, ACS), regardless of the topic. These funds are from the American Cancer Society Institutional Research Grant (ACSIRG). This grant provides support for beginning investigators to enable them to initiate their independent research program. A completed application is due Nov. 15. [Details here.](#)

### Reminders

#### ●IUSCC's Cancer Center Support Grant due in fall 2013

In September 2013, the IU Simon Cancer Center's National Cancer Institute Cancer Center Support Grant (CCSG) will be due. Consequently, the cancer center's executive committee and research program leaders are currently undertaking a critical review of the program and its membership, as well as finalizing program themes, goals, and aims. All members are encouraged to assist their program leaders as they begin working on their respective narratives. The program leaders will need assistance from their members on compiling research highlights for those narratives. Program leaders are also planning retreats and participation among members is important. The CCSG is an important source of funding for the cancer center's [shared facilities](#). This support, along with IU Simon Cancer Center funding, assures that cancer center members have access to the highest quality technology for their research. For a current overview of the cancer center, [watch](#) the "State of the Cancer Center" presentation that Patrick Loehrer, MD, director of the IU Simon Cancer Center, delivered on Sept. 6.

#### ●New proposal writer/editor

Deborah MacDougall has been named the cancer center's proposal writer/editor. Her primary responsibility will be to work with principal investigators and project managers to assist in the writing of large multidisciplinary grant proposals. She can be reached at 274-0262.

#### ●BCOG conference is Nov. 8-9

Mark your calendars for this year's BCOG Annual Fall Conference on "Team Science." Held Nov. 8-9 at the JW Marriott, the conference is sponsored by the Behavioral Cooperative Oncology Group (BCOG), a consortium of four universities: Indiana University, Michigan State, University of Michigan, and The Ohio State University. Co-sponsors are the Walther Cancer Foundation, IU Simon Cancer Center, Indiana Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute, and the Office of the

Vice Chancellor for Research at IUPUI. Kara Hall, PhD, program director at the National Cancer Institute, will deliver the keynote address. Register online: <http://www.eventbrite.com/event/4219336148>.



Hari Nakshatri, BVSc, PhD, and George Sledge, MD, appear on the Jumbotron inside Lucas Oil Stadium during pre-game festivities at the Oct. 7 Indianapolis Colts game. The Colts recognized the two for their contributions to the fight against breast cancer during Breast Cancer Awareness Month activities.

#### Cancer center members in the news

- Long known to stimulate cell growth, the signaling protein Akt has been implicated in a number of human cancers. But in a new study published Oct. 23 in *Science Signaling*, a team of researchers found that Akt also can impair the growth of blood-forming stem cells that can develop into cancers like leukemia. In the study, the team demonstrated for the first time that Akt, a member of the family of kinase proteins that fine tunes the activity of other proteins, inhibits the function of Bmi1, a protein critical to the renewal of stem cells that are implicated in cancer. Their study showed that Akt and Bmi1 interact, a finding that not only provides insight into a novel biological pathway, but opens the door to better treatments for leukemia and possibly other cancers. **Yan Liu**, PhD, served as the study's lead author.



- **Kathy Miller**, MD, has been named a Breast Cancer Research Foundation (BCRF) grant recipient for her study "Impact of Breast Cancer Treatment on Energy Expenditure Pilot Trial." Dr. Miller has been a recipient of BCRF grants since 2003. This year, BCRF is making grants of \$40 million to support breast cancer research programs worldwide. Since its inception in 1993, it has raised more than \$380

million.

- **Gregory Zimet**, PhD, has received a University of Sydney (Australia) International Research Collaboration Award. The award will allow Dr. Zimet to work for five weeks at the University of Sydney on collaborative behavioral research projects related to HPV vaccine acceptance and adolescent health. While in Australia, he will be working with university researchers on the development of brief behavioral interventions to encourage HPV vaccination. In addition, the time in Sydney will allow him to concentrate on several ongoing collaborative projects, including one funded by the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council, on which he serves as a co-investigator.
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- Zimet
- **G. Marie Swanson**, PhD, has been elected a member of the Board of the American College of Epidemiology. She will serve until 2015.
  - **Patrick Monahan**, PhD, is a recipient of a R01 grant from the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS) to assess the clinical validity of the NIH PROMIS pain and depression questionnaires in patients with chronic pain, stroke, and mild traumatic brain injury. The study also will be relevant to cancer patients who experience pain and/or depressive symptoms. **Kurt Kroenke**, MD, is a co-investigator.
  - **Daniel Sliva**, PhD, shared findings about the anti-cancer benefits of three unique botanical supplements: a breast formula, a prostate formula, and a preparation called modified citrus pectin (MCP) derived from citrus peels during this year's Meeting of the Society for Integrative Oncology in Albuquerque, NM. This evolving body of peer-reviewed evidence continues to further substantiate the powerful anti-cancer effects of these health formulas. Original *in vitro* results on the breast and prostate formulas were later confirmed *in vivo*, demonstrating through each phase of research that these formulas work through multiple mechanisms of action on the cellular and genomic levels.
  - **George Sledge**, MD, has been named a 2013 Award of Excellence honoree by the Hope Funds for Cancer Research for advancing innovative research for the most difficult to treat cancers. The award honors those who have made outstanding contributions to basic, clinical, and medical research in cancer or conducted prominent advocacy and philanthropy on behalf of cancer research.

#### New members

**Gary Dunnington**, MD  
*Department of Surgery*  
 Affiliate member

**Laurie Littlepage**, PhD  
*University of Notre Dame*  
 Associate member, Breast Cancer

**Sophie Paczesny**, MD, PhD  
*Department of Pediatrics*  
 Full member, HMI

**Correction** : Jennifer Proseri, PhD, was incorrectly identified as a Notre Dame faculty member in last month's e-letter. Dr. Proseri is an IU School of Medicine-South Bend faculty member and a member of the Harper Cancer Research Institute, a partnership between IUSM-South Bend and the University of Notre Dame.

#### New grants

**Asok Antony**

"Optimizing Maternal-Child Health in Kenya"  
NIH

**Randy Brutkiewicz, PhD**

"Novel Mechanisms Regulating Post-transplant Humoral Alloimmunity"  
Ohio State University

**Victoria Champion, PhD**

"Long-term Psychosocial Impact of Breast Cancer on Young Survivors and Partners"  
NIH-NINR

**Ken Cornetta, MD**

"Gene Therapy Resource Program Lentivirus Vector Production Core Laboratory"  
NIH-NHLBI

**Alexander Dent, PhD**

"Development of Follicular Helper T Cell Deficient Mice"  
NIH-NIAID

**Joseph Dynlacht, PhD**

"Initial Characterization of a Non-pharmacological Radiation Countermeasure"  
NIH-NIEHS

**Melissa Kacena, PhD**

"Thrombopoietin: A Novel Regulator of Bone Healing"  
NIH-NIAMS

**Kurt Kroenke, MD**

"Collaboration to Preserve Performance in Late Stage Cancer"  
Mayo Clinic

**Amber Mosley, PhD**

"Regulation of RNA Polymerase II Transcription by the Phosphatase Rtr1"  
NIH-NIGMS

**Irina Petrache, MD**

"Metabolic Profiles of COPD Phenotypes"  
National Jewish Health

**Ernestina Schipani, MD, PhD**

"Notch and Hypoxia Intervertebral Disc Development"  
Thomas Jefferson University

**Jingwu Xie, PhD**

"Regulation of Immune Surveillance by Hedgehog Signaling in Tumor Microenvironment"  
NIH-NCI

**Feng-Chun Yang, MD, PhD**

"Investigating the Role of Erk1/2 in the Development of Plexiform Neurofibromas"  
Howard Hughes Medical Institute

**Greg Zimet, PhD**

"DNase for Prevention of Reproductive Tract Infections in Pregnancy"  
Columbia University