



August 2012

## **Simple test for identifying childhood leukemia in Kenya goal of Indiana, Moi University cancer doctors**

A unique idea to identify leukemia in children earlier in western Kenya has earned grant funding from Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation for Childhood Cancer for an IU School of Medicine pediatrician and IU Simon Cancer Center researcher.

**Terry Vik**, MD, associate professor of clinical pediatrics, has been awarded one of three epidemiology awards from Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation for Childhood Cancer. Dr. Vik is the principal investigator for the two-year award for \$199,000.



Vik

The research is a joint project of Indiana University and the AMPATH Oncology Institute in conjunction with Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital and the Moi University School of Medicine in Eldoret, Kenya. The IU School of Medicine has a long-standing partnership with Moi University and AMPATH (Academic Model Providing Access to Healthcare).

The idea utilizes a common lab test for detecting malaria parasites in a drop of blood. In addition to looking for malaria, the slide also can be studied to detect leukemia cells in the same drop of blood.

"We are trying to improve the detection rate of leukemia in children," Dr. Vik said. "In western Kenya, only 20 to 30 cases of childhood leukemia are detected each year. Based on the population of children in that area, we would expect to see up to 10 times that number of cases," he said.

"Our project will test whether it is feasible to use the common malaria laboratory slide test to detect the rare condition of leukemia. If we can do that, then we can train technologists to detect it as well, and arrange for the referral of children to the hospital for treatment in a more expeditious manner," Dr. Vik said.

A pediatric hematology-oncology specialist, Dr. Vik is the medical director for the Childhood Cancer Survivor Program at Riley Hospital for Children at IU Health.

--Mary Hardin



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## Core spotlight

### ***In Vivo* Therapeutics Core**

The [In Vivo Therapeutics \(IVT\) Core](#) provides IU Simon Cancer Center investigators with cost-effective and comprehensive services to facilitate the development and testing of novel pharmacological and cellular therapies.

Pharmacological investigation includes *in vivo* dose range finding, *in vivo* tumor growth kinetics, *in vivo* drug efficacy/tumor xenograft model, and cellular therapies. Mouse xenograft models are available for development of rational dosing regimens, assessment of potential organ/tissue toxicities, and drug efficacy studies.

In addition, *in vitro* toxicity testing is available to look at the effect of novel compounds on primary human hematopoietic cell viability and function. Additionally, new model development is also available. The IVT Core is now using a tumor manager software system that is linked to an electronic caliper for more accurate and consistent measurements of ectopic tumors (flank) as well as increasing efficiency of data collection and management. Live phase biomedical small animal imaging -- both fluorescence and bioluminescence -- are available and can be conducted in conjunction with the Indiana Institute for Biological Imaging Sciences. Stem-cell transplantation services include irradiation of mice, intravenous injection of human or murine hematopoietic stem cells, and sampling of peripheral blood over time to monitor chimerism. *In vivo* samples can be analyzed by the core via Flow Cytometry or provided to the lab for analysis.

"Over the past year, the core served more than 50 investigators in some capacity, ranging from mouse breeding to *in vivo* efficacy studies," Tony Sinn, the IVT Core manager, said. "Additionally, there has been a growing need for development and scale up of orthotopic models in mice."

Core personnel are highly trained and have extensive experience in many different animal models, dose routes, and species (including transplantation, surgical, and stereotactic procedures). The core has increased in size to five personnel, two of which are shared with Dr. Karen Pollok's laboratory.

In partnership with Dr. Pollok's lab, the IU Simon Cancer Center recently hired Michael Liu, MD, PhD, from the Cleveland Clinic who has a vast background in small animal surgeries. Besides his appointment in Dr. Pollok's lab, he will also begin to interface with the brain tumor working group and the pancreatic cancer research group to scale up orthotopic models.

#### ***In Vivo* Therapeutics Core**

**Karen Pollok**, PhD, is director of the core. She can be reached at 274-8891 or [kpollok@iupui.edu](mailto:kpollok@iupui.edu).

Tony Sinn is the core manager. He can

The core specializes in glioblastoma, pancreatic cancer, lung cancer, osteosarcoma, and mammary fat pad implantation (metastatic cancer). Numerous models of ectopic flank models are also available. The IVT Core also manages the Experimental Mouse Resource Core, which is in its second year of funding

be reached at 274-8811 or [alsinn@iupui.edu](mailto:alsinn@iupui.edu).

The IVT Core is located on the fifth floor of Walther Hall.

You can find all of the IU Simon Cancer Center cores [here](#).

through the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disease (NIDDK) Center of Excellence in Molecular Hematology. **Hal Broxmeyer**, PhD, and **Edward Srouf**, PhD, are co-directors of that center.

The IVT Core also maintains on-site breeding colonies of NOD/scid, NOD/scid/IL2Rgnull, Boy/J, and F1/BoyJxC57Bl/6 mice for the study of cells of human origin. Over the past year, the core began to maintain small transgenic colonies for studies requiring fluorescent tracking of specific hematopoietic cell lineages. "Maintaining these colonies on campus has provided a tremendous cost and time savings to many investigators at the IU School of Medicine," Dr. Pollok, core director, said.

Last year, the IVT Core significantly expanded its capabilities by assuming responsibility of the newly renovated irradiation facility. This facility currently houses a GammaCell 40 Exactor cesium irradiator used for small animal irradiation and a recently purchased MARKI cesium for small animal and mammalian cell irradiations.

"We continue to strive to bring new technologies and approaches into the core," Dr. Pollok said. "We have developed very strong and productive relationships with many groups on campus. Our goal will also be to help however we can to assist investigators to successfully compete for those precious research dollars."



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## News briefs

### Sept. 6: "State of the Cancer Center"

**Patrick J. Loehrer, MD**, director of the IU Simon Cancer Center, presents "State of the Cancer Center" from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 6 in the auditorium of Joseph Walther Hall as part of the cancer center's [Combined Seminar Series](#). All are welcome.

### Dr. Stephen Williams portrait unveiling

All are invited to the portrait unveiling of the late Dr. Stephen Williams, founding director of the IU Simon Cancer, at 11:30 a.m. Thursday, Sept. 13 in the lobby of the IU Health Simon Cancer Center patient facility, 1030 W. Michigan St. Dr. Williams died of cancer, the very disease to which he dedicated his career, on Feb. 15, 2009. The portrait was done by Indianapolis artist Rob Day whose illustrations and portraits have graced the pages of many of America's leading magazines, including *Time*, *Esquire*, *GQ*, *Rolling Stone*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Entertainment Weekly*, and *Smithsonian*. He is a graduate of the Herron School of Art & Design. "I'm delighted to have been given the honor of creating this portrait of Dr. Williams," Mr. Day said. "In working with Mrs. Williams and representatives of the IU Simon Cancer Center, it was clear that I needed to reflect his exuberance for life and his profession. I also recognized the importance of capturing what people have described to me as his 'famous smile.' On a personal level, I feel privileged to help recognize someone who was revered by many and whose life, sadly, was cut short by cancer. I've lost family and friends to melanoma and understand the impact that it has on families, colleagues, and certainly, in Dr. Williams' case, the cancer center."

### Change in clinical program name

The patient care program of the Indiana University Melvin and Bren Simon Cancer Center and the patient facility at 1030 W. Michigan St. soon will become known as the Indiana University Health Melvin and Bren Simon Cancer Center. The change will eliminate confusion among patients, families, and the public as Hoosiers and others have become increasingly aware of IU Health since its launch in January 2011.

By using IU Health Melvin and Bren Simon Cancer Center, the cancer center's clinical offerings become more clearly aligned with IU Health, assuring patients and the public of the link to a comprehensive healthcare system. The new name also highlights the strong partnership with the Indiana University School of Medicine and acknowledges the generosity of Melvin and Bren Simon. A new sign will be going up on the cancer center building on Michigan Street in early September, replacing the three current signs. All other signage, advertising, and other patient-facing items will change to IU Health Melvin and Bren Simon Cancer Center in the coming months.

Because many members of the IU Simon Cancer Center are scientists or faculty not involved in patient care activities in the IU Health system, the name change will not apply to the research and education missions of the cancer center. The IU Simon Cancer Center name will remain for those components, and you'll continue to see IU

Simon Cancer Center on scientific papers, presentations, posters, and other research-related items.

This change will also not affect the fund-raising program coordinated by the IU School of Medicine.

If you have any questions about this change, please contact Michael Schug at [maschug@iupui.edu](mailto:maschug@iupui.edu).

## 2 from IUSCC earn Fisher Family Fund awards

A medical fellow and a nurse from the IU Simon Cancer Center are recipients of awards from the Fisher Family Fund, established by Bill Fisher, MD, of IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital. Costantine Albany, MD, who is completing a fellowship in the genitourinary oncology program, recently was awarded the inaugural George and Sarah Jane Fisher Young Investigator Award, a \$5,000 grant provided by the Fisher Family Fund. Dr. Fisher established this award in memory of his brother and mother to encourage hematology/oncology fellows from the IU Simon Cancer Center to become involved in Hoosier Oncology research. Dr. Albany earned the award for displaying a deep and realistic commitment to the vision of Hoosier Oncology and an altruistic passion to make a substantial contribution to the benefit of others through research of the highest quality and scientific rigor. Marietta Moore, RN, nurse coordinator in the testis cancer program, recently received the Sandra Turner Excellence in Clinical Research Award, a \$1,500 unrestricted educational grant. The Turner award was established in memory of Sandra Turner, the first executive director of the Hoosier Oncology Group. Recipients of this award epitomize qualities Sandra possessed and respected in others, such as sustained professional commitment, contribution to the progress of oncology care, and the unflinching touch of compassion. Congratulations to both.

## Stroger Hospital of Cook County hosts Komen Tissue Bank collection Saturday, Sept. 29

For only the second time, the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Tissue Bank at the IU Simon Cancer Center is traveling outside of Indiana for a breast tissue collection. On Saturday, Sept. 29, the John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital of Cook County in Chicago will host the next collection. Staff from Stroger's Minority-Based Community Clinical Oncology Program (MBCCOP) will join physicians, staff, and volunteers from the Komen Tissue Bank for the event. By collecting samples from women without breast cancer, researchers may be able to determine the differences between healthy and cancerous tissue, which will lead to a better understanding of the disease.

Please encourage women you know in the Chicago area to consider donating and direct them to [www.komentissuebank.iu.edu](http://www.komentissuebank.iu.edu) for additional information. Those interested in donating may contact Liz Way at (866) 763-0047 or [eswells@iupui.edu](mailto:eswells@iupui.edu). Donors must have a confirmed appointment time.

The Komen Tissue Bank, the first and only healthy breast tissue bank in the world, will next hold a collection event in Indianapolis on Saturday, Nov. 3. To date, more than 2,800 women have donated breast tissue samples.

## Support Komen Tissue Bank at the IU Simon Cancer Center during Indiana Fever game Sept. 14

The Indiana Fever's Breast Health Awareness Night puts the spotlight on the Komen Tissue Bank at the IU Simon Cancer during its home game on Friday, Sept. 14. By purchasing tickets via <https://www.fevergroups.com/tickets/466> and using code "KTB," you will help support the Komen Tissue Bank as a portion of the proceeds will be directed to it. You will also receive a 10 percent off coupon good for either of the gift shops at Bankers



**TISSUE BANK AT THE  
IU SIMON CANCER CENTER**

Life Fieldhouse. The

Fever take on the Minnesota Lynx at 7 p.m.; doors open at 6 p.m. The Fever -- led by MVP Tamika Catchings who won a gold medal for the U.S. team at the London Olympics -- is currently ranked second and will likely advance to the WNBA playoffs. Since the Olympics break, the Fever has been 5-1.


### **Burkhardt named new Hoosier Oncology director**

Cyndi Burkhardt has been named executive director of the Hoosier Oncology Group by the organization's board of directors. A registered nurse with more than 20 years of health-care experience, Burkhardt previously served as a program director at Hoosier Oncology Group.



Burkhardt

### **IU Health aims to transform cancer care with Via Oncology Pathways**

As part of its continued drive to transform cancer care throughout Indiana, [Indiana University Health Cancer Centers](#) will implement the Via Oncology Pathways, a platform for standardizing evidence-based medicine, across its cancer programs. Via Oncology Pathways are treatment recommendations based on published data and information that are tailored to a patient's specific cancer type and stage of the disease. [more](#) 

### **Call for entries for IUSM Art Exhibit**

Do you or one of your colleagues have an artistic side? Are the doodles of the third-year on the lab stool next to you reminiscent of Picasso? Instead of relaxing at the pool, do you paint, draw, write, carve or make pottery to unwind? If so, this message is for you. The fifth annual IUSM Art Exhibition "Scientific Inquiry, Artistic Expression" is accepting entries to showcase the work of the students, staff, faculty, and alumni of the IU schools of medicine, nursing, dentistry, and health and rehabilitation sciences, as well as that of employees from Roudebush VA, Wishard, and IU Health. The deadline for submitting work is 5 p.m. Monday, Oct. 1. See the full details at [www.medicine.iu.edu/art/](http://www.medicine.iu.edu/art/).

### **Reminder**

#### **Mark your calendars: BCOG annual 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.

### **Cancer center member in the news**

- Obesity has been associated with inferior outcomes in operable breast cancer, but the relation between body mass index (BMI) and outcomes by breast cancer subtype has not been previously evaluated. However, **George Sledge**, MD, and colleagues evaluated the relationship between BMI and outcomes in three adjuvant trials that included chemotherapy regimens with doxorubicin and cyclophosphamide, including E1199, E5188, and E3189. The authors found in a clinical trial population that excluded patients with significant comorbidities obesity was associated with inferior outcomes specifically in patients with hormone

receptor-positive operable breast cancer treated with standard chemohormonal therapy. Their findings were reported online in [Cancer](#).



Sledge

### **New members**

#### **[Doug Schwartzentruber, MD](#)**

Associate Director of Clinical Affairs, IU Simon Cancer Center  
System Medical Director, IU Health Cancer Services  
Affiliate member