

Improving survival rates: development of a new diagnostic test for ovarian cancer

Researchers at Hudson Institute are trialling a screening test for the detection of ovarian cancer, in the hope of improving survival rates.

Summary

Ovarian cancer is the eighth most common cancer overall among women, and is the most common cause of death from a gynaecological cancer. Each year, around 1600 Australian women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer, and nearly a quarter of a million women worldwide (OCRF).

Considered a “silent killer”, ovarian cancer can progress from early to advanced stages of disease within a year. Symptoms at early stages are non-specific, and often not noticeable until disease has progressed. Patients and clinicians may attribute these symptoms to other causes, resulting in delayed testing and treatment. Over 70% of women diagnosed with ovarian cancer have later-stage, metastatic disease. However, prognosis is best when ovarian cancer is detected at early stages with a five-year survival rate for stage I of 90% and stage II of 60-80%, and decreasing at stage III to 30% and stage IV to < 10%.

There is an urgent and unmet need for a simple and routine screening test for ovarian cancer. At present, physical examination, imaging, and CA-125 blood testing may be used to detect abnormalities indicative of ovarian cancer, but definitive diagnosis requires surgery and biopsy.

Hudson Institute researchers have developed a screening test for the detection of ovarian cancer. Implementation of such a test has the potential to greatly impact upon survival rates, providing patients with an improved diagnosis and hopefully enabling earlier access to treatment. The long-term goal of this project is to develop a test that becomes part of a woman’s regular screening schedule, alongside screening for breast and cervical cancers.

Development pathway

Our team are currently conducting a prospective trial of the test, recruiting 300 women at high risk of developing ovarian cancer.

They are currently seeking opportunities for co-investment, licensing or collaboration to further develop this cancer treatment program.

Team

Our team is led by Dr Andrew Stephens, an Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation (OCRF) Research Fellow and head of Hudson’s Ovarian Cancer Biomarkers research group. A leading authority on the application of proteomics technologies and a Senior Research Affiliate (Honorary) with Epworth Healthcare, Dr Stephens is one of Australia’s foremost experts in the field of ovarian cancer research.

Hudson Institute of Medical Research

Hudson Institute of Medical Research is a leading Australian medical research institute recognised internationally for research into reproductive health and pregnancy, infant and child health, inflammation and cancer. Our research programs span discovery science and translational research, and clinical trials.

Our worldwide scientific and medical collaborations provide a foundation for transformative healthcare programs across the globe, with our researchers leading developments in cell therapies, women’s health, microbiome research, diagnostics, and cancer.

Partnership opportunities include:

- Therapeutics, including oncology and gene therapy
- Reproductive, women’s and children’s health
- Regenerative medicine
- Inflammation and immunology
- Diagnostics and biomarkers

Contact us

e: commercialisation@hudson.org.au

t: +61 3 8572 2008

w: <https://hudson.org.au/commercialisation/>