

RESOURCES program newsletter 2021

What is the RESOURCES program?

Welcome to Cancer Council Victoria's first RESOURCES program newsletter!

RESOURCES, short for *Rare and Emerging Subtypes of Under-Researched Cancers; Epidemiological Studies*, is a Cancer Council Victoria program bringing together several studies that aim to investigate less-common cancer types.

Epidemiological studies of cancer require large numbers of cases. This makes cancer types such as breast cancer and prostate cancer easier to study, but leaves less-common types of cancers under-researched. With this in mind, Cancer Council Victoria has created the RESOURCES program to bring together under one mantle a suite of studies that use similar methodologies and data collection tools to investigate under-researched cancers. You have received this newsletter because you participate in one of the following RESOURCES studies:

- **Epidemiology of Multiple Myeloma in Australia (EMMA)**
Aims to provide information that will contribute to the prevention of multiple myeloma and related conditions.
- **CONFIRM Kidney Cancer Project (also known as CARE Study - Collaborative Australian Renal carcinoma Epidemiology)**
Aims to investigate the causes of renal malignancies.
- **Forgotten Cancers Project (FCP)**
Aims to find out more about the causes of less-common cancers.
- **Lymphoma, Lifestyle, Environment & Family Study (LEAF)**
Aims to investigate risk factors for follicular lymphoma.

- **Australian Genomics and Clinical Outcomes of High-Grade Glioma (AGOG)**

Aims to learn more about lifestyle and hereditary factors that contribute to the development of glioma.

We hope that this newsletter will help you stay up to date on our researchers' work in this area and show you how your participation and the data you contributed aid our efforts to understand and control less-common cancers. Below, we highlight some of the work being done using FCP, CONFIRM and EMMA. Our work is ongoing – our researchers are currently using AGOG and LEAF data to conduct analyses, and we continue to develop further collaborations for the FCP. We will update you in future newsletters about these exciting developments.





Searching for genomic factors for pancreatic cancer

FCP data to be used in international research project

A large international collaboration led by research colleagues from Johns Hopkins University and the US National Cancer Institute (NCI), and using data from over 25 studies conducted in Europe, the US and Australia, including the FCP, has recently secured funding and is now underway.

The goal of this collaboration is to improve our understanding of the genetic basis of pancreatic cancer, a major cause of cancer death, whose incidence (globally as well as in Australia) has been steadily increasing over the past decade.

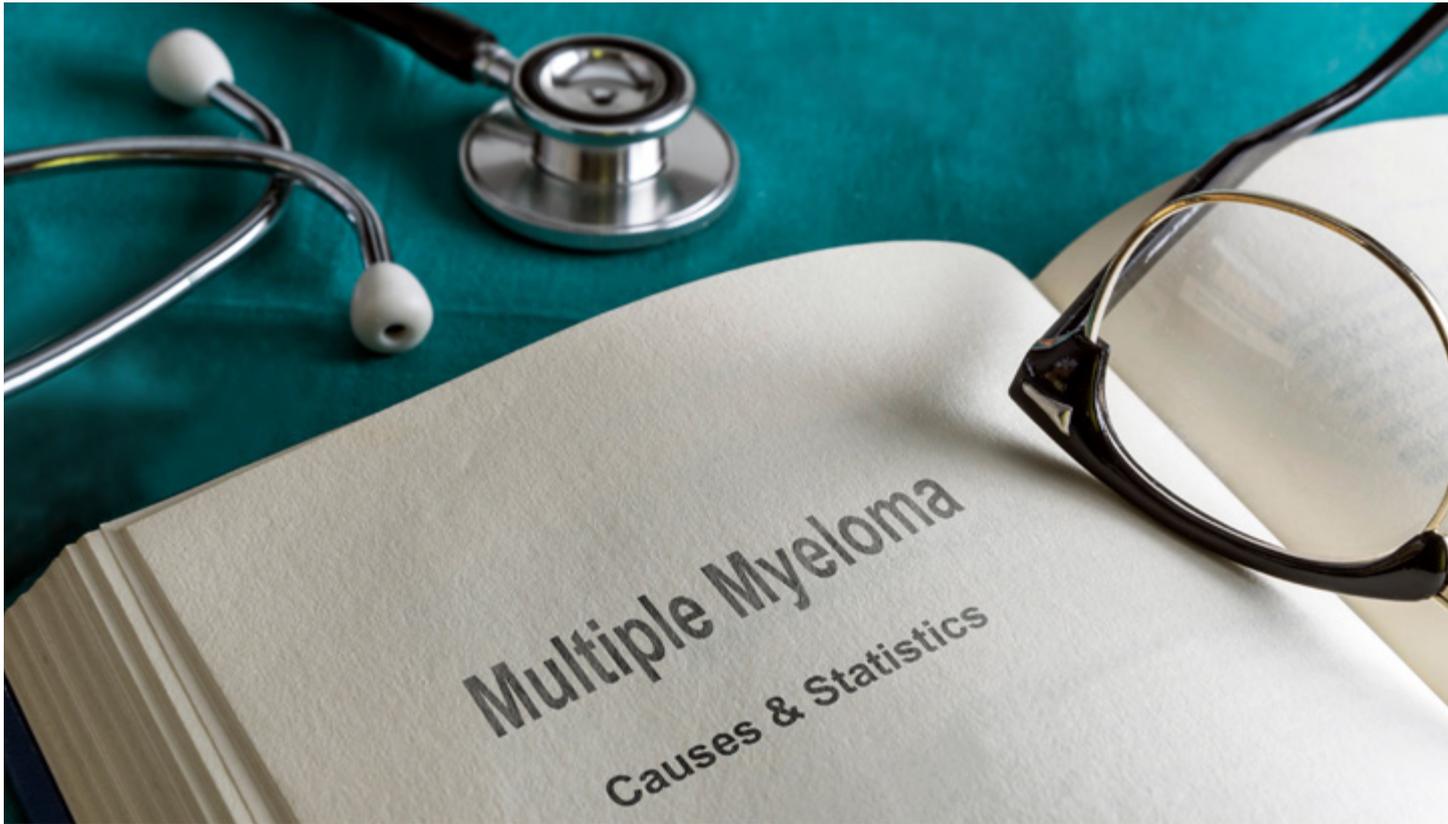
Pancreatic cancer incidence has mostly been studied in people of European ancestry. Concentrating on only a single ethnicity gives us a narrow view of human genomes and can cause us to miss important genomic variants that are rare or absent in Europeans. This study aims to expand our view of pancreatic cancer genomics: its first stage will focus specifically on African Americans through 'whole genome sequencing' – analysing the entire genomes of 1,000 pancreatic cancer patients of African ancestry and 1,000 controls,

to find new genomic regions associated with pancreatic cancer risk.

In its second stage, the study will expand to detect pancreatic cancer association across all ethnic groups using genomic data from 25,000 pancreatic cancer patients and 60,000 controls, and conduct multi-ethnic genome mapping. Data from the Forgotten Cancers Project will contribute to this stage of the research.

In addition, the study will analyse the interaction of genomic factors with known risk factors for pancreatic cancer: smoking, obesity, diabetes, and alcohol consumption.

Understanding the genetics of pancreatic cancer risk is of critical importance to reducing the burden of this devastating disease. The researchers hope to identify new genomic variants responsible for pancreatic cancer risk, and to better understand how genomic factors combine with other risk factors to influence risk. This could help pancreatic cancer prevention, improve screening efforts for this notoriously hard-to-detect cancer, and find better treatments to combat it.



Smoking, alcohol consumption and risk of multiple myeloma

Research from the EMMA study

Multiple myeloma is responsible for significant mortality and morbidity. Despite this, little is known about the modifiable causes of multiple myeloma, and no sizeable study has yet investigated this in Australia, which has the world's highest incidence of the disease.

Few risk factors for multiple myeloma have been firmly established. With an average age at diagnosis of approximately 70 years, and steeply rising incidence with increasing age, multiple myeloma is mainly a disease of the older population.

PhD student Simon Cheah has been analysing EMMA Study data to investigate whether smoking or alcohol consumption is associated with multiple myeloma risk.

Specifically, he is investigating:

1. Whether there is an association between alcohol consumption and risk of multiple myeloma.
2. Whether there is an association between cigarette smoking and risk of multiple myeloma.
3. Whether these associations differ between men and women.

Many of the studies examining tobacco or alcohol and multiple myeloma have been limited in scope or had methodological shortcomings. By investigating various aspects of tobacco and alcohol consumption in detail, and using appropriate methodology, Simon hopes this study could advance knowledge about the causes of multiple myeloma, especially in the Australian context. This could facilitate future studies into the course of this disease and inform future prevention efforts.

Simon's analysis is now being expanded to include controls from other RESoURCES studies, including CONFIRM. The additional data will allow researchers to be more confident of these findings. This is a good demonstration of the power of combining the RESoURCES studies.

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RESOURCES program
Cancer Epidemiology Division
615 St Kilda Rd, Melbourne 3004

Or email the details to:

forgottencancers@cancervic.org.au
confirm@cancervic.org.au
emma@cancervic.org.au

OR phone the details to:

1800 068 289

Pain medication use and risk of renal cell carcinoma

Findings from the CONFIRM Project

Renal cell carcinoma (RCC) is the most common type of kidney cancer, and its incidence is rising. Laboratory studies have shown that pain medication such as paracetamol, aspirin and other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs affect kidney function. Several studies have investigated their association with risk of RCC, and while some have found an association, others have not. Given the widespread use of these medicines, it is important to clarify whether they are associated with risk of RCC.

This large study, led by Dr Fiona Bruinsma, recruited people with RCC from population-based cancer registries. It also recruited their siblings and spouses as controls. The researchers are comparing pain medication use between those with and without RCC and, taking into account other key differences between the two groups.

These findings could help inform clinical advice to reduce the risk of renal cell carcinoma. This study could also guide future, more detailed research examining how specific types of pain medication are associated with RCC risk.

This work is being prepared for publication.



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