Cancer Council Western Australia
Research Project Grant

Cancer Council WA

Project Title	Improving treatment options for pancreatic cancer
Recipient	Prof Ruth Ganss
Institution	Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research
Research description	Pancreatic cancer is a devastating and incurable disease. It has a dismal 5 year survival rate below 7%. Our goal is to improve currently available anti-cancer therapies and overall patient survival using a newly developed drug. In particular, our research team is looking into how blood vessels grow in cancers. These blood vessels nourish cancers, but fail to bring in chemotherapy to kill the cancer. It is already known that blood vessels in cancer are leaky and their shape and tone is abnormal. Over the last years, the team has been working on strategies to control these blood vessels and make them more like normal blood vessels in the body. As a result, the team has developed a new drug which binds to abnormal cancer blood vessels. Upon binding, shape and tone of cancer vessels are restored and they become tighter. Our research will now test in a preclinical model of pancreatic cancer whether combining this new drug with current standard-of-care therapies such as chemo- and immunotherapy will improve cytotoxic drug effects and also make the immune system work better to fight the cancer; toxic side effects which are well known to cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy should be reduced. Moreover, it is expected that tightening of cancer blood vessels will stop cancer cells from spreading throughout the body. Therefore our research aims at improving anti-cancer therapy, limiting toxic side effects and preventing metastatic cancer growth.
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Fully supported	In the name of Jill Tilly