

Highlights of Prostate Cancer Research in Ireland



Prostate Cancer Research Consortium
Five years of working together
2004-2009



Molecular
Medicine
Ireland

1. Prostate Cancer in Ireland

Each year in Ireland about 2,500 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer and there are about 500 deaths from the disease. Men in Ireland have a 1 in 9 lifetime risk of developing prostate cancer, making it the most common cancer in men.¹

The National Cancer Registry estimates that the incidence of prostate cancer will double in the next ten years, which means that around 4,000 new cases of prostate cancer will be diagnosed in 2020.²

2. Why Do We Need Research On Prostate Cancer?

The PSA blood test is used in the diagnosis of prostate cancer. However, this blood test is not perfect, so better tests are needed.

Also, not all prostate cancers are the same. For example, some grow very slowly and others grow very fast. Some cancers respond well to treatment when others do not, and we do not always understand why.

We need research to find better tests to diagnose prostate cancer. Also, research will help us to understand more about this disease, and so find the best treatments for each prostate cancer patient.

1 Cancer In Ireland 1994-2007, National Cancer Registry of Ireland, 2009.

2 The National Cancer Registry of Ireland.



3. About the Prostate Cancer Research Consortium (PCRC)

The Prostate Cancer Research Consortium is a group of doctors, scientists, and research nurses all working together to find better ways to diagnose and treat prostate cancer.

This group of researchers started working together in 2004 when they were given funding from the Irish Cancer Society.

The focus of the research has been solving real problems that are faced by prostate cancer patients and their doctors.

The researchers work across four hospitals and four universities in Dublin.

They use cutting-edge technologies in the laboratories to learn more about how the disease starts and develops so that new treatments can be discovered. They are also looking for new markers of prostate cancer. Markers are substances found in the blood and prostate tissue that can be used to detect if the patient has cancer.

4. Prostate Cancer Biobank

Researchers need to examine real cases of prostate cancer in order to fully understand how these cancers start off and grow.

This is why collecting patient samples in what is called a biobank is an important part of this research.

The Prostate Cancer Research Consortium has set up a biobank where blood, urine and tissue is collected from men who are having surgery to treat their cancer.

The biobank is not just a collection of patient samples but it also contains clinical information (such as the type or grade of disease and the patient's outcome after surgery).

This is the first biobank in Ireland that is approved and licenced by the Data Protection Commissioners and has the highest standards of patient confidentiality.

There is a very high level of willingness among Irish men to take part in this type of research. A recent survey found that almost 85% of men agreed or strongly agreed with donating tissue for research.³

3 Fitzpatrick, PE, McKenzie, KD, Beasley, A, Sheehan, JD; Patients attending tertiary referral urology clinics: willingness to participate in tissue banking. Br J Urol Int 2009;104: 209-213.

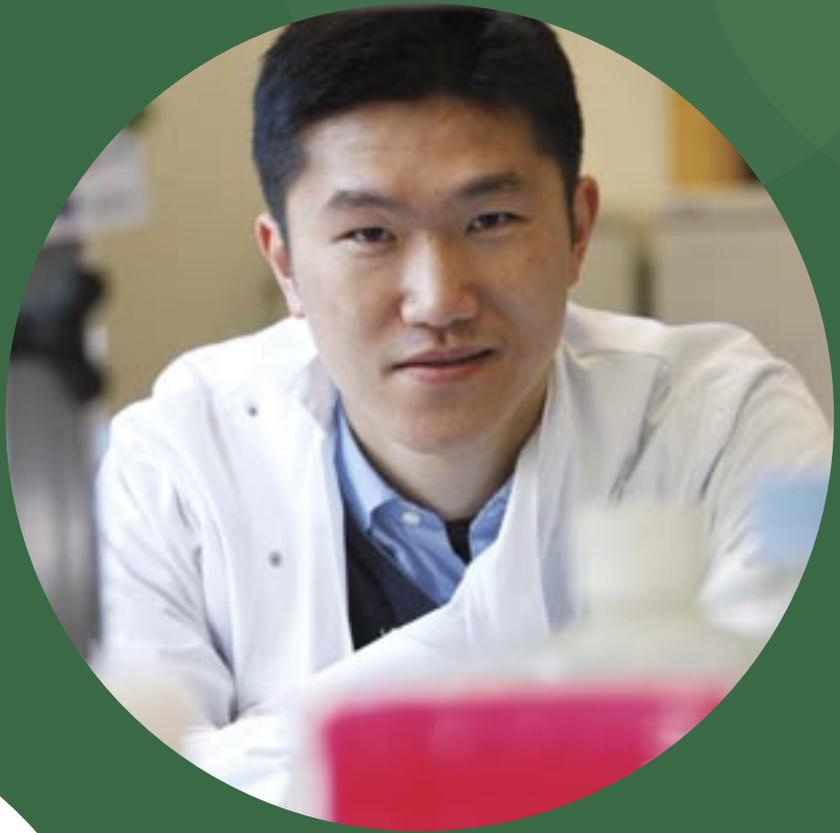
5. Meet research team members

The Research Student

Yue Fan

University College Dublin

I came to Ireland from China in 2007 to do my PhD. I have been working on finding new markers for prostate cancer. I am also an expert in statistics and I often give statistics advice to other prostate cancer researchers for their experiments. The thing I most enjoy about working in the PCRC is the team work.



The Research Nurse

Maureen Brennan

Beaumont Hospital

Without patients, medical research would be very limited. My role is to meet patients, provide them with clear information about prostate cancer research and get informed consent from them to take part in the research.



The Postdoctoral Researcher

Antoinette Perry

Trinity College Dublin

For me, one of the highlights of working in the Prostate Cancer Research Consortium has been the chance to work with many other scientists. I find the research that I do very rewarding - every day we are asking questions that no-one in the world knows the answers to. I hope that my research will help to bring better markers of prostate cancer into the clinic.



The Surgeon-in-training

Deirdre Fanning

Research completed in
University College Dublin

As a surgeon in training, my time within the Prostate Cancer Research Consortium allowed me to develop many important research skills. It is important for doctors to understand research and to always look for better options for their patients.

6. Research Highlights

In the last five years...

- Over 550 patients have given tissue and blood samples to the biobank.
- The research team have made important discoveries which have been published in over 30 scientific papers. These papers are read by researchers all over the world.
- New markers have been found which could help diagnose prostate cancer earlier and also help the doctor and patient decide on the best treatment to use. These are now being tested in larger groups of patients in Europe and Australia.
- Different ways to improve responses to radiation and chemotherapy have been found.
- New drug compounds that kill cancer cells but not normal cells have been developed.
- The Consortium has been involved in the training of over 30 young dedicated prostate cancer researchers and doctors.

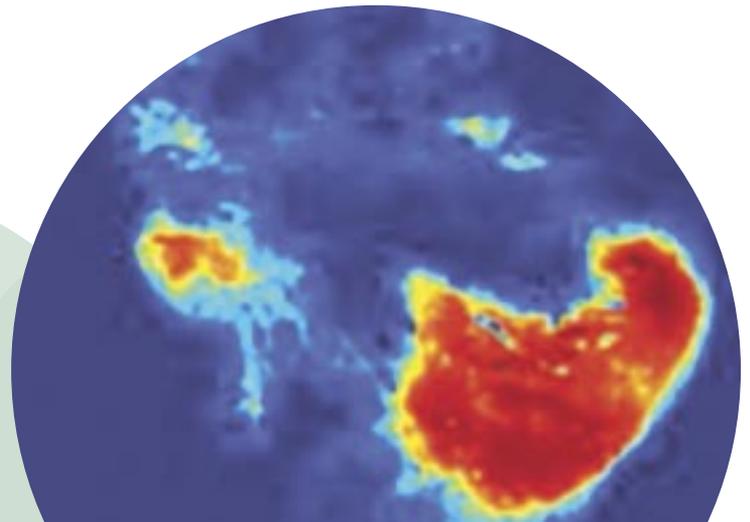
7. Future

The Prostate Cancer Research Consortium is proud of what it has achieved so far. The research team will continue to work hard to find new and better ways to diagnose and treat prostate cancer.

The researchers plan to expand the team to other universities and hospitals across Ireland. They also want to work with prostate cancer researchers outside of Ireland. This will make sure that the research being done here in Ireland is always world class.

One of the aims for the next five years is to triple the number of blood and tissue samples donated by patients to the prostate cancer biobank.

Prostate cancer patients are a very important part of the Prostate Cancer Research Consortium. Without them, this research would not happen.





The Patient

Sean White

Prostate cancer survivor and biobank donor

I was very happy to take part in the research and donate tissue to the prostate cancer biobank. I believe that medical research is the first step on the road to saving lives. Without it, we will never find a cure.

Thank You

The researchers would like to thank the patients who have taken part in this research, and ask patients and the public to continue to support cancer research in Ireland.

If you have prostate cancer and would like to take part in research, please contact your doctor for more information.

If you would like to support cancer research in Ireland, contact the Irish Cancer Society's Fundraising Team on CallSave **1850 60 60 60** or visit **www.cancer.ie**





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