PancreasFest 2016

By David C. Whitcomb, MD, PhD

PancreasFest 2016 (PF16), July 27–29, Pittsburgh, PA. The overarching goal of this annual and international PancreasFest conference is to assemble physicians and scientists from academic medical centers that actively participate in clinical research. Both thought leaders and young investigators participated to advance collaboration and implementation of pancreatic multicenter studies. A key element of this conference is dedicated time to discuss basic scientific and mechanistic research topics of critical importance to clinical and translational research, along with methods of implementation. The theme of PF16 was “Risk Factors which Alter the Injury Response and New Targets for Therapy.”

The program was integrated with the 9th International Symposium on Inherited Diseases of the Pancreas (see page 3), and an NIDDK Workshop (July 27): “Chronic Pancreatitis in the 21st Century: Research Challenges and Opportunities” (see page 3). The coordination of these three meetings allowed many of the top physicians and scientists in the world to come together to discuss the most important topics in pancreas disease research and treatment today.

One of the highlights was a focus on pancreatitis-associated pain, including four clinical-translational sessions, plus a Pain Scientific Mini Symposium. Physicians and scientists discussed the development of a consensus statement on how pancreatic pain should be described in clinical and research studies, based on guidance from a number of international pain experts.

Pediatric experts associated with INSPPIRE (International Study Group of Pediatric Pancreatitis In Search of a Cure) met for an annual meeting and to discuss issues of acute pancreatitis in children. The group is active in setting new guidelines for management of children with pancreatitis — a problem that is overdue for expert analysis and recommendations.

The Ruth C. Brufsky Award for Excellence in Research in Pancreatic Cancer in 2016 went to Teri Brentnall, MD, The Charles and Mary Ann Walters Endowed Chair Professor of Medicine, Co-Director, Pancreatic Cancer Surveillance Program, Division of Gastroenterology, University of Washington Medical Center Seattle, WA.
Do you share certain traits or physical characteristics with different family members? For example, do you share the same eye or hair color, or do people tell you that you look more like a particular family member? We each share different traits with different relatives because traits are inherited from generation to generation. Sometimes, these traits are passed down in a predictable pattern. These are generally called Mendelian traits.

Genetic counselors and other medical professionals use family trees (also known as pedigrees) to get a picture of your family health history. Family trees can show how different family members are related and provide a map of different traits inherited in the family. Hereditary pancreatitis is an example of a Mendelian trait.

**Draw Your Family Tree!**

Be sure to ask an adult for help before completing this project.

**What you will need:** A piece of paper and a pen/pencil. Alternatively, free family trees forms can found online or you can use ‘My Family Health Portrait’ at https://familyhistory.hhs.gov/FHH/html/index.html.

**Instructions:**

1. **Draw out your family tree for at least 3 generations.** Place older generations above the younger ones, and draw lines to connect related family members. **Tip:** Genetic counselors draw circles for females and squares for males. In the example above, John and Sue are the parents of Billy and Cindy. You can also cut out a picture of each person's face and paste it to your piece of paper. Check out https://www.genome.gov/pages/education/modules/yourfamilyhealthhistory.pdf for examples of pedigrees.

2. **Add traits to your family tree.** You can add symbols or color code your family tree for each trait. For example, look for individuals in your family with a widow's peak, a v-shaped hairline in the center of the forehead. Use a colored pencil to shade these individuals and map out the inheritance. Other fun traits you can look for in your family members are:

   - Hitchhiker’s thumb — make a thumbs up. If your thumb is curved, you have a hitchhiker's thumb.
   - Detached v. attached earlobes
   - Left handed v. right handed
   - Able v. not able to roll tongue
   - When you clasp your hands, is your right hand on top or your left hand?
   - Look for other traits that run in your family!

**Tip:** Make a key for each of your color codes. If you are looking at multiple traits, color a small area of each person's symbol for each trait.

Can you identify trace different traits up the tree and identify which grandparent (or even which great grandparent) they came from? When genetic counselors look at a pedigree, they search for traits that are being inherited in specific patterns. Genetic counselors use this information to identify hereditary health traits in a family and calculate the chance an individual will inherit a family trait.

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**Butternut Squash Soup**

*By Julia Greer, MD, MPH*

This soup contains almost a full day’s worth of beta carotene and vitamin C.

**Ingredients:**
- 4 cups (about 1-1/2 pounds) butternut squash, peeled and cut into cubes
- 3 small carrots, grated
- 3 cups reduced-sodium vegetable broth
- Salt and pepper

**Preparation:** Coat a large stockpot with nonstick cooking spray and place over medium-high heat. Add olive oil, then leeks; sauté leeks 6 to 7 minutes, until soft and translucent. Add ground nutmeg and cinnamon and heat until fragrant, about 1 to 1-1/2 minutes. Add squash, carrots, and broth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and let simmer 20 to 25 minutes, until vegetables are tender. Turn off heat and let cool slightly. Purée in a blender or food processor until mixture is thick and even in consistency. Return to pot; season with salt and pepper as desired and heat gently until warm. Serve immediately. Makes 4 servings.
She reviewed her ground-breaking clinical and translational research in an award lecture entitled, “Earlier Detection of Pancreatic Cancer.”

The Collaborative Alliance for Pancreatic Education and Research (CAPER) sponsored a special session to highlight innovative work by young investigators. This included four up-and-coming experts: Sachin Wani, MD, Philip A. Hart, MD, B. Joseph El Munzer, MD and Robert Moran, MD.

The delegates to the program also discussed ways to improve patient care throughout the United States by setting high standards for academic pancreatic centers of excellence and by working with the National Pancreas Foundation center of excellence programs.

Planning is underway for PancreasFest 2017, to be held in Pittsburgh, PA on July 26–28, 2017.

Chronic Pancreatitis in the 21st Century: Research Challenges and Opportunities

The National institutes of Health, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) sponsored a one-day workshop in Pittsburgh, PA on July 27, 2016 immediately prior to, and coordinated with PancreasFest. The program was entitled, “Chronic Pancreatitis in the 21st Century: Research Challenges and Opportunities.”

The object was to discuss recent advances in the understanding of the pathophysiology of hereditary and acquired chronic pancreatitis (CP) that provided new insights into the shared and separate mechanisms of these diseases. The role of genetic testing, the evaluation and treatment of pain syndromes, and the possible value of separate treatment algorithms clearly provide new evidence for improved management of CP. The workshop explored these advances, informing the community of clinician investigators, and identified research gaps that might shape future funding initiatives by the NIDDK and other agencies.


9th International Symposium on Inherited Diseases of the Pancreas

The International Symposium on Inherited Diseases of the Pancreas is a bi-annual program alternating between Europe and the U.S. Scientists and investigators from government and industry are also invited to participate, and have made significant contributions in previous years. The focus of this symposium was the 20th Anniversary of the discovery of the hereditary pancreatitis gene (PRSS1), by Dr. Whitcomb’s team. This opened the door to a deeper understanding of pancreatitis and the importance of genetics.

The highlight of the symposium is the Henry Lynch Award and Lecture. The introduction was presented by Markus M. Lerch, MD, FRCP, “The Pancreas and 1996: Before and Beyond.” The award went to Professor David C. Whitcomb, MD, PhD, who spoke on “Pancreatic Disorders and Precision Medicine.” Other highlights of the symposium were international presentations on “Genetic Susceptibility to Pancreatitis” (Claude Ferec, MD, PhD, France), “New Genetic Insights into Alcohol-Related Pancreatitis” (Jonas Rosendahl, MD, Germany) and “Advances in Pancreatic Disease Genetics in Japan” (Atsushi Masamune, MD, PhD, Japan).

The 10th International Symposium on Inherited Diseases of the Pancreas is being planned to occur in 2018 in Europe (location TBD).
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Sincerely,
The Pancreatic Studies Office

The Hereditary Pancreatitis Study

The Hereditary Pancreatitis Study is an ongoing research study at the University of Pittsburgh. The goal is to gather information that may be used, in the future, to improve treatment and help clinicians make better clinical decisions.

Have you participated in this research study in the past and are over the age of 18? If so, we want to ask you some new online questions on health and quality of life. If you are interested, please contact Celeste Shelton, MS for more information by calling 412-864-2826 or our toll-free number at 1-888 PITT-DNA/1-888-748-8362, or by email at cas186@pitt.edu. She will confirm your enrollment in the research study and provide you with an individualized link to the web-survey. For those unable to take the new survey online, a paper form is available. Thank you to all of our current and past participants for helping us to better understand hereditary pancreatitis!