

Platypus link to ovarian cancer

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Researchers from the Royal Adelaide Hospital and University of Adelaide believe our oldest mammalian relative may help us to better understand ovarian cancer.

University of Adelaide geneticist, Dr Frank Grützner says DNA mapping of the platypus has uncovered an interesting relationship between their [sex chromosomes](#) and DNA sequences found in human ovarian cancer.

"We've identified DNA on the sex chromosomes of the platypus that is similar to the DNA that is affected in ovarian cancer and other diseases of reproduction like male infertility," Dr Grützner says.

"Cancers often show a large number of DNA changes and it is difficult to decide which ones are important for the development of the disease. The comparison with distantly related species like platypus helps us in identifying important DNA sequences that have been conserved by evolution over millions of years.

"We are excited by the fact that the analysis of the platypus genome gives us new directions in investigating the molecular basis of ovarian cancer."

Working in partnership with Dr Grützner is Associate Professor Martin Oehler, an ovarian cancer specialist from the Royal Adelaide Hospital, who says it's about finding new ways to tackle the disease.

"We hope this sort of research might one day lead to the development of an early detection test and more effective therapies against ovarian cancer," Dr Oehler says.

"Ovarian cancer is the most lethal gynaecological cancer and ranks as the 6th most common cause of cancer death in Australian women."

Both Dr Oehler and Dr Grützner say the applications of this research are not limited to [ovarian cancer](#), as they try to gain a better understanding of a number of diseases.

Provided by University of Adelaide ([news](#) : [web](#))

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