

# Gefitinib may have chemopreventive benefits in pancreatic cancer

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Gefitinib may be a promising chemoprevention agent for pancreatic cancer, according to a study published in *Cancer Prevention Research*, a journal of the American Association for Cancer Research.

The study is published in the November issue, and was discussed during a press conference at the Ninth Annual Frontiers in Cancer Prevention Research Conference, held here Nov. 7-10, 2010.

[Pancreatic cancer](#) has a dismal prognosis because it is often asymptomatic and not detected until it is in late stages. Strategies to combat pancreatic cancer have focused on earlier and earlier treatments, and this is the first time that a chemoprevention strategy has been tried.

Chinthalapally V. Rao, Ph.D., director of the Center for Chemoprevention and Cancer Drug Development at the University of Oklahoma Cancer Institute, tested the strategy in mice.

The mice were bred to be at high risk for pancreatic cancer and then fed gefitinib in escalating doses of 0, 100 and 200 ppm for a period of 35 weeks, at which time the [tumor](#) incidence was analyzed.

Compared to the group that received no gefitinib, the mid-dose group experienced 77 percent fewer pancreatic tumors and the high-dose group had 100 percent fewer tumors.

In the 100 ppm group, 67.6 percent of the mice were free of pancreatic

intraepithelial [neoplasms](#), a known pre-cursor to pancreatic cancer, compared with 77.3 percent in the 200 ppm group.

"These findings are dramatic enough that human trials should begin soon," said Rao. "The clear message is that the earlier we start, the better the outcome is, and we can already measure neoplasm levels in humans so there is a potential here for clinical benefit."

Provided by American Association for Cancer Research

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