

Video: The yin-yang of cancer and infectious disease

January 20 2017, by Robert Sanders

Doctors have had great success using vaccines to boost the immune system to fight infectious diseases like smallpox and measles, but only recently have immune system boosters been tried against cancer.

The growing success of such attempts—a booming field called immunotherapy that was pioneered at UC Berkeley—proves that studying the way the [immune system](#) deals with these two types of invaders, cancer cells and pathogens, could greatly improve therapies for both.

This is the goal of UC Berkeley's Immunotherapeutics and Vaccine Research Institute, launched last year to explore the commonalities of cancer and infectious disease, and use discoveries in one area to improve treatment in the other.

Russell Vance and his colleagues Daniel Portnoy, Michael Eichberg and IVRI faculty director David Raulet argued for this approach in a perspective piece appearing in the current issue of the journal *Science Immunology*.

"The two fields are dramatically intertwined ... and have much to learn from each other. More interactivenss is likely to fuel major strides in both fields," Raulet told the website Healthline News last week. In addition to directing IVRI, Raulet is the Esther and Wendy Schekman Chair in basic [cancer](#) biology.

In the video, Vance, an associate professor of molecular and cell biology and a Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator, and IVRI researcher Sarah Stanley discuss how basic discoveries in one field trigger insights in the other. Stanley is an assistant professor of molecular and [cell biology](#) and a tuberculosis researcher.

Provided by University of California - Berkeley

Citation: Video: The yin-yang of cancer and infectious disease (2017, January 20) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-01-video-yin-yang-cancer-infectious-disease.html>

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