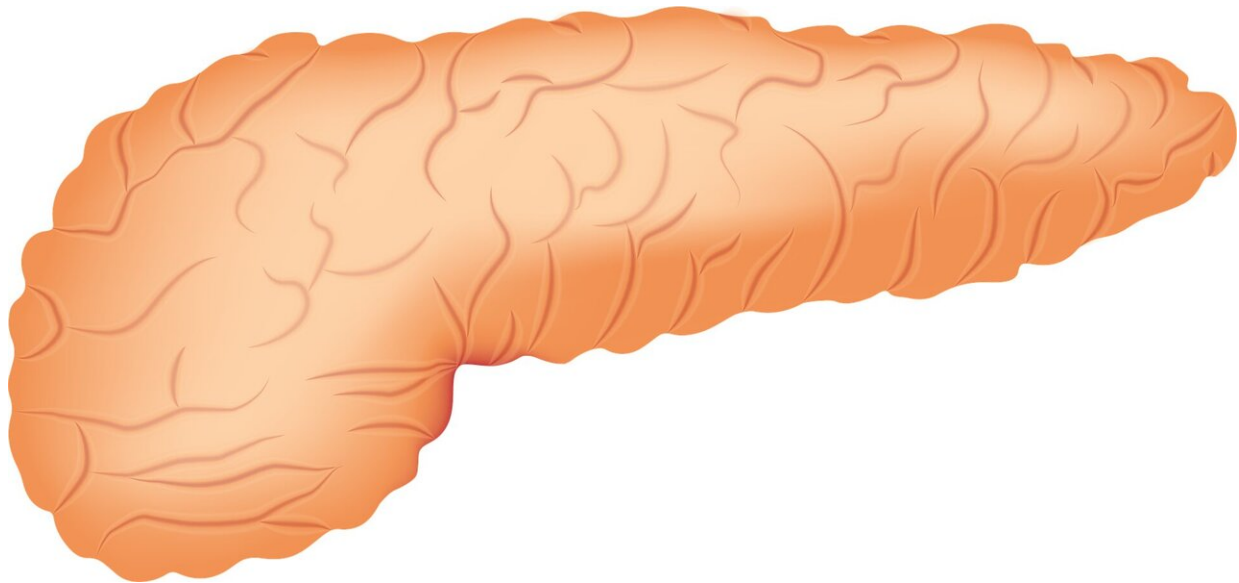


# UK's unique national pancreas tissue bank opens for business

December 9 2020

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The UK's national tissue bank for pancreatic diseases is open for applications from any UK-based researchers needing samples of blood, urine and saliva to aid their research.

The Pancreatic Cancer Research Fund Tissue Bank (PCRF Tissue Bank) was set up in 2016 with £2.4 million from the medical research charity, and is the largest of its kind in the world.

Its creation brought together surgeons, pathologists, oncologists, researchers and database experts to co-ordinate a national—and ultimately international—resource that will help to drive the development of diagnostic tools and new treatments for [pancreatic](#) diseases and bring these to patients much faster.

Coordinated from the Barts Cancer Institute at Queen Mary University of London, the PCRFB Tissue Bank has been steadily building stocks of biological fluids and pancreas tissue. It now holds some 45,000 unique samples of blood, urine, saliva and tissue as well as matched surrounding healthy tissue, donated from 2,200 consenting patients (collected over 2,800 visits) who underwent biopsies or surgery for a range of pancreatic diseases at one of eight partner hospitals across the UK.

The anonymised samples cover a range of diseases, including different types of pancreatic [cancer](#) (adenocarcinoma and neuroendocrine), different types of pancreatitis, pancreatic cysts and pre-cancerous lesions plus diseases of the gall bladder and biliary ducts. Each [sample](#) comes with some 300 clinical data points. In addition, extensive bio-informatic support and analytics is available through the Pancreas Expression Database. Large numbers of healthy control blood, saliva and [urine samples](#) are also available, culminating in what the Tissue Bank's directors believe is an unparalleled national resource for researchers and clinicians working on pancreatic diseases.

Researchers can register their interest for samples by visiting [www.thepancreastissuebank.org/ResearcherInfo.html](http://www.thepancreastissuebank.org/ResearcherInfo.html)

Professor Hemant Kocher, a pancreatic cancer researcher at Barts Cancer Institute, Queen Mary University of London, and consultant pancreas and liver surgeon, has spearheaded the development of the Tissue Bank. He says: "We're really proud of what's been achieved so far. It was always a highly ambitious venture, but one that was much

needed to speed up research progress, particularly for pancreatic cancer, where prognosis remains devastatingly bleak for most patients."

This 'Phase 1' access to biological fluids will be welcomed by all those investigating biomarkers for earlier disease diagnosis. Phase 2 will see the release of fresh cancer and matched healthy tissues, as well as formalin fixed paraffin embedded samples to help progress research into new treatments.

"We also hope in due course to be able to respond to researcher requests for prospective samples," adds Professor Kocher. "The timing of this will depend on the expressions of interest we receive."

Professor Kocher is also keen to offer access to samples to the international research community as soon the team are confident that stocks are sufficient to meet the expected level of interest.

An additional feature of this resource will see all data generated by research projects using PCRFB Tissue Bank samples fed back into a bespoke database and made freely available to the global research community.

A built-in Research and Development arm of the Tissue Bank is overseeing development of newer methods of analysis and further derivatives of samples such as [cell lines](#), tissue micro-arrays and DNA extraction to enhance the research capability. For example, the PCRFB Tissue Bank has developed a new method for freezing tissue samples.

Maggie Blanks, CEO of Pancreatic Cancer Research Fund, said, "We knew that to deliver the most meaningful research results, we had to ensure that researchers have access to quality-controlled [tissue](#) and fluids that are collected, handled and stored consistently and to strict protocols. We're excited to open the Tissue Bank and even more excited to see

what new knowledge and progress it enables."

Provided by Queen Mary, University of London

Citation: UK's unique national pancreas tissue bank opens for business (2020, December 9)  
retrieved 26 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-12-uk-unique-national-pancreas-tissue.html>

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