
Pancreatic Cancer

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Pancreatic cancer is the fourth most common cause of cancer deaths in the United States.

- 42,500 people in the United States were diagnosed with the disease in 2009. Only 5.5% are likely to survive the next five years.
- That same year, pancreatic cancer claimed the lives of an estimated 35,000 Americans.

Since 1980, the combined effort of cancer researchers has increased five-year survival rates by over 50%, though there is still much work to be done.

Our Achievements in Pancreatic Cancer Research

Damon Runyon scientists have been on the forefront of pancreatic cancer research for the past several years.

Our scientists:

- ✓ identified a panel of biomarkers that, when measured simultaneously, dramatically improve the accuracy and sensitivity of pancreatic cancer diagnoses.
- ✓ discovered that pancreatic cancer tumors are much more complex than previously realized and identified twelve core pathways that are altered in most pancreatic tumors.
- ✓ made a fundamental breakthrough in the manipulation of pancreatic cells by reprogramming a common pancreatic cell into an insulin-secreting cell.

Current Pancreatic Cancer Research Projects

Damon Runyon is currently funding many scientists who are researching ways to better diagnose, treat and cure pancreatic cancer. These funding are:

- undertaking a comprehensive genetic analysis of endocrine tumors, which affect hormone-producing organs such as the thyroid and parts of the pancreas. The underlying genetic basis for endocrine tumors is currently unknown, and this research could provide critical insights into their development and treatment.
- redefining our understanding of how the p53 pathway, the most commonly mutated pathway in human cancers, including pancreatic, is involved in suppressing tumors.
- working to identify new protein networks interacting with the K-Ras signaling pathway, known to be involved in many human cancers. These networks may be useful new targets for combinatorial therapy for colorectal and pancreatic cancers.
- finding genes that act in concert with BRCA1, which could better explain the specific effect that BRCA1 genes have on breast, prostate and pancreatic tissue carcinogenesis.

**Most Statistics adapted from the SEER Cancer Statistics Review, 1975-2006*