

Breaking Ground in the Fight Against Small Cell Lung Cancer: Paul Albrechtsen Research Institute CancerCare Manitoba Scientist Secures Major Grants

By CCMB Communications

Fri Feb 09 13:30:00 CST 2024



A scientist at the Paul Albrechtsen Research Institute CancerCare Manitoba has been awarded several significant grants to conduct studies into one of the most aggressive forms of lung cancer.

Principal Investigator Dr. Joel Pearson, PhD, was awarded over \$983,000 by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) in the Fall 2023 Project Grant Competition.

The grant will support Dr. Pearson's work over five years to better understand the underlying causes of small cell lung cancer and how small cell lung cancer progresses in patients. This understanding will, in turn, help Dr. Pearson and fellow researchers identify new and improved treatments for small cell lung cancer so patients living with this devastating cancer will have longer lives and better outcomes.

Lung cancer is one of the most common types of cancer and it causes more deaths than any other type of cancer in Canada. Small cell lung cancer is one type of lung cancer and has the worst outcomes out of all the different types of lung cancer with the average patient surviving less than one year after diagnosis.

Unfortunately, there are very few treatment options for patients with small cell lung cancer and the treatment options and survival rates for patients with small cell lung cancer have not improved in decades. Dr. Pearson says scientists do not know enough about small cell lung cancer and its underlying causes, which is why discovery about the disease has lagged behind other cancers.

An additional award will help support Pearson's investigation. He received \$25,000 in supplemental funding through the Early Career Researcher Award in Cancer which was granted to the highest-ranking Early Career Researcher focused on cancer research in the Fall 2023 Project Grant Competition.

"I'm very thankful to CIHR and the reviewers for funding our work on small cell lung cancer," said Dr. Pearson. "I also want to thank to our collaborators for their support."

In addition to the CIHR grant, last month Dr. Pearson received \$550,000 from the Canadian Cancer Society's Emerging Scholar Research Grant. He was named among 16 recipients from across eight provinces.

Over five years, he will study how small cell lung cancer progresses with a team of researchers including Dr. Shantanu Banerji, Dr. Britt Drögemöller, Dr. David Dawe, Dr. Gefei Qing, along with patient-partner Sandra Swystun. Together they will study why certain lung cancers mutate and form resistance to current treatments.

Paul Albrechtsen Research Institute CancerCare Manitoba congratulates Dr. Pearson on these significant awards. We anticipate significant contributions to small cell lung cancer research as a result of this well-deserved recognition.