

UK'S FIRST DEDICATED PROSTATE CANCER VIRTUAL BIOBANK LAUNCHED

THE FIRST virtual biobank dedicated to prostate cancer research has been launched today (Sunday) by the National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI).

The UK Prostate Cancer Sample Collection Database will house details of around 10,000 biological samples taken from men in the UK with and without prostate cancer.

The virtual biobank will also hold other materials that will be useful for research, including DNA, RNA, blood and urine, increasing the total to around 100,000 samples.

Data on prostate cancer risk, how cancers have responded to treatment and the molecular make-up of the cancers will be anonymised and available for scientists to use in collaborative studies.

The database has been developed by The ProMPT (Prostate cancer mechanisms of progressions and treatment) Collaborative and the Southern Prostate Cancer Collaborative, which are funded by NCRI partners.

Additional sample databases from prostate researchers outside the Collaboratives are being added to make the virtual biobank an essential resource for all scientists working to turn prostate cancer discoveries in the lab into better treatments for patients.

Dr Hayley Whitaker, a prostate cancer researcher from Cancer Research UK's Cambridge Research Institute who helped develop the database, said: "One of the biggest challenges in prostate cancer treatment is identifying the men with aggressive prostate cancers who should be treated, as opposed to others with non-aggressive tumours who could be monitored.

"This new biobank holds both clinical and molecular data, which could help us find a marker to help doctors make this difficult decision."

Biobank lead developer Dr Daniel Brewer from The Institute of Cancer Research said: "Until now, UK prostate cancer scientists have generally been limited to conducting research on patient samples they could acquire themselves or through collaborations they forged themselves. This biobank will help improve scientists' access to precious samples and hence increase the accuracy of results and make new discoveries more likely."

Dr Jane Cope, director of the NCRI, said: "This is a really important resource for prostate cancer researchers. The new database will help ensure that scientists are able to make best use of samples donated by patients, avoiding waste and speeding up progress in understanding the disease and improving treatment."

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For media enquiries, please contact Rachel Gonzaga in the NCRI press office on 020 3469 8252 or, out-of-hours, the duty press officer on 07050 264 059.

Notes to editors:

The database can be found at <http://www.prostatedatabase.org.uk>

The database will be linked to ONIX, The NCRI's Oncology Information eXchange (ONIX) – a free-to-use portal that connects many of the main public sources of cancer research data. ONIX can be found at <http://www.ncri-onix.org.uk>

All contributors welcome enquiries about access to samples and the formation of research collaborations. Anyone wishing to add a collection to the database can contact the coordinators via the website. All samples are collected ethically and in accordance with the Human Tissue Act.

The UK Prostate Cancer Sample Collection Database is funded by NCRI partners. The ProMPT (Prostate cancer mechanisms of progressions and treatment) Collaborative and the Southern Prostate Cancer Collaborative are funded by NCRI partners with additional funds coming from the Department of Health and the Medical Research Council. Their work is supported and underpinned by the ProtecT Trial. The ProtecT Trial is currently the largest randomised trial investigating the effectiveness of treatment for clinically localised prostate cancer ever carried out. It is funded by the Department of Health through its NIHR / HTA programme (96/20/6; 96/20/99). <http://www.hta.ac.uk/1230>; <http://www.epi.bris.ac.uk/proct/>.

About the NCRI Cancer Conference

The National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) Cancer Conference is the UK's major forum for showcasing the best British and international cancer research. The Conference offers unique opportunities for networking and sharing knowledge by bringing together world leading experts from all cancer research disciplines. The seventh annual NCRI Cancer Conference is taking place from the 6-9 November 2011 at the BT Convention Centre in Liverpool. For more information visit www.ncri.org.uk/ncriconference

About the NCRI

The National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) was established in April 2001. It is a UK-wide partnership between the government, charity and industry which promotes co-operation in cancer research among the 21 member organisations for the benefit of patients, the public and the scientific community. For more information visit www.ncri.org.uk

NCRI members are: the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI); Association for International Cancer Research; Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council; Breakthrough Breast Cancer; Breast Cancer Campaign; Cancer Research UK; CHILDREN with LEUKAEMIA, Department of Health; Economic and Social Research Council; Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research; Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research; Macmillan Cancer Support; Marie Curie Cancer Care; Medical Research Council; Northern Ireland Health and Social Care (Research & Development Office); Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation; Scottish Government Health Directorates (Chief Scientist Office); Tenovus; Welsh Assembly Government (Wales Office of Research and Development for Health & Social Care); The Wellcome Trust; and Yorkshire Cancer Research.

www.ncri.org.uk/ncriconference

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