

The Palchak Connection

Hope for a Cure... Begins with Research

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S1712: New Option for CML by David Palchak, MD



Chronic myelogenous leukemia (CML) is always caused by an acquired genetic trait, the BCR-Abl fusion gene that encodes an abnormal enzyme that can be blocked by one of five different tyrosine kinase inhibitors (TKI) drugs, e.g. dasatinib. The development of these drugs was of momentous importance, because it proved the principal that blocking an enzyme thought to be responsible for a malignancy could fix the cancer.

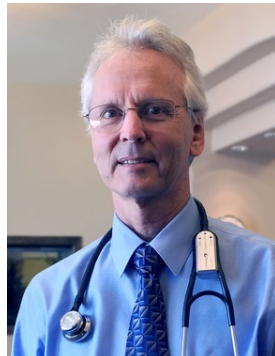
About half of the patients who stop their TKI after achieving a complete response will stay in remission and about half will relapse quickly because of a few leukemic cells hiding in the bone marrow. **These patients must generally take their TKI for life unless a way is found to induce a deeper remission.**

Ruxolitinib blocks a different tyrosine kinase (Jak2) than dasatinib and alters the bone marrow in ways that may enhance sensitivity to it. S1712 is a "randomized phase II" trial, in which all participants continue their usual BCR-

Abl TKI and with half also receiving ruxolitinib.

Preclinical data suggests the combination is synergistic. Phase I human data demonstrates safety of ruxolitinib with dasatinib, but efficacy data in humans is lacking. Treatment will be continued for 360-days, after which patients come off protocol treatment and can be treated as they and their physician choose.

Patients hoping to induce deeper remissions with the goal of curing their CML and stopping their TKI may be interested in this trial as it offers a chance of a more aggressive treatment (short of bone marrow transplant) that may afford a cure.



Clinical Study Patient Makes PCR History By Marie Palchak

Teaching middle school science for 17 years has had its share of challenges, as well as rewards. For the past two years, Barbara Hashim, of Bakersfield, has taught classes in computer applications and introduction to engineering through Project Lead the Way.

In October 2007, she was diagnosed with chronic myelogenous leukemia (CML) and has cycled through most of the five tyrosine kinase inhibitors (TKI) drugs available to treat this disease. She has experienced many side effects including joint and muscle pain, headaches and chronic fatigue, describing them as "life-impeding".

For the past 12 years Barbara has sought

treatment with Dr. Brian Druker, considered "the father of targeted therapy". Last summer she learned of a clinical trial, testing the addition of a new drug to her current treatment. This trial offers the hope of a deeper remission or cure.

Barbara was excited when the opportunity to participate in the study with Dr. Druker became available, but struggled with the idea of traveling to Oregon every three months for follow-up. She found that PCR Oncology offers this trial and became the first study patient to travel for treatment from outside of SLO county.

Barbara understands the importance of making time for the things she enjoys such as traveling and trail walking and describes herself as adventurous, caring, silly, fiercely loyal, with a sense of humor.

The chronic fatigue that Barbara endures led her to adopt a puggle, pictured left in the family photo, which she named Lunesta (Luna) and fondly refers to as her "nap buddy".

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Daffodils given as "Gifts of Hope"

Every year, JPCF President Marie Palchak puts together vases of fresh cut daffodils that are distributed to PCR Oncology patients throughout one week in March. Marie has continued this tradition for many years as symbolic "Gifts of Hope". Daffodils have many things in common with cancer patients and cancer survivors.

This beautiful flower signifies resilience, as strong survivors who weather winter storms. Because daffodils are some of the first flowers to bloom in springtime and are a great indicator that winter is over, they are considered a representation of rebirth and new beginnings. Their cheerful bright yellow and white colors are a symbol of positivity that signify joy and an appreciation for being alive!

Pictured is PCR Receptionist Ivory Gallegos.



Serving our Local Community Since 2003

A federally recognized 501(c)3 non-profit organization governed Federal Tax I.D. 010730501

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Supporting JPCF

Once again locals Rosie Saenz and Penny Rodriguez outdid themselves! Year after year these two ladies do breast cancer fundraising for JPCF that has financially benefitted the work we do at providing funds for local cancer research.



This past fall, Rosie did a "Masquerade" themed mailing instead of her usual in-person event and raised \$2,300.

Penny from Penny's All American Café raised \$8,000 this past fall with a special in-house fundraiser for her customers and also sold T-shirts and coffee mugs. Penny's All American Café is located at 1053 Price Street in Pismo Beach.



We are so appreciative and grateful for their dedication, commitment, and efforts.



Support from the Arroyo Grande Lions Club

Thank you to the Lions for generously showing their support of JPCF by underwriting the cost of mailing our Fall 2021 *Celebrating Cancer Survival* mailing in lieu of the in-person event.

Your Donations Are Working!



This past November, JPCF mailed out our annual appeal letter to more than 1,000 members of the community, in which we were seeking donations. Donations we receive support the cancer research that is being done locally at PCR Oncology. **Your donations are working!** PCR's ability to offer clinical trials locally makes a huge impact on patients, so they don't have to travel to larger cities or out of state for treatment.

We are extremely grateful and humbled by the generosity of our community in this year's campaign which totaled almost \$28,000 in donations. **Your donations are working!** These funds make it possible for us to continue working at finding cures for cancer, assures the preservation of local cancer research and gives cancer patients life sustaining treatment options.

Your donations are working!

Plans for a Cancer Survivor Celebration

Be sure to mark your calendars for Saturday, October 22nd to **SAVE THE DATE** for our 2022 Cancer Survivor Celebration!

Since 2009, JPCF has been hosting a luncheon with informational guest speakers and special gifts for cancer survivor attendees.

Due to the pandemic we unfortunately had to cancel the event in 2020 and 2021.

However, we are moving forward in our planning and keeping our fingers crossed that we will be able to hold an in-person luncheon with all the usual fanfare.

The October 22nd event will be held at 959 Valley Rd., Arroyo Grande beginning at 10:30am.



Clinical Study Patient Makes PCR History

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Luna, along with Barbara's husband Ernie and their children Haley and Brett remain by her side, supporting her on this cancer journey.

As an instructor and student of science, Barbara believes in the value of cancer research and its impact on society now and into the future. By participating in a clinical trial, she helps **lead the way** for the discovery of better treatments, benefitting herself and others.

She shared the story of the recent day when she learned that she was randomized to the arm of the study in which she would receive

the "study drug".

She belongs to an online group of patients of Dr. Druker who stay in touch. One man, who was enrolled in the first CML study, which tested the drug Gleevec over 15-years ago, shared that he was celebrating his 65th birthday. He expressed his gratitude for Dr. Druker and the original study for making his 65th birthday possible.

Barbara believes this was a sign to her, confirming the decision to enroll in the study, by bringing hope to others that they too, can reach birthdays and other life milestones.