

Early Detection of Ovarian Cancer



Frazer Lab

Kelly Frazer, Ph.D., Chief of the Division of Genome Information Sciences
Christian Barrett, Ph.D., Project Scientist, Division of Genome Information Sciences

CURRENT RESEARCH

Early detection dramatically improves survivability

Ovarian cancer is largely asymptomatic until it is at an advanced stage, and so is commonly first diagnosed at Stage 3 or 4---very late on the cancer spectrum. Of the roughly 22,000 women (half of whom are less than 63 years old) diagnosed every year in the U.S. with advanced ovarian cancer, 80% will eventually die from the disease. When detected at an early stage (i.e. Stage 0/1) ovarian cancer has a cure rate approaching 95%. Unfortunately, only about 15% of ovarian cancer cases are detected in the early stages. All early detection screening approaches attempted to date have been unsuccessful. Dr. Christian Barrett of the Frazer Lab in the Division of Genome Information Sciences at UC San Diego is developing a method that appears to be promising for the early detection of ovarian cancer. His approach is based on detecting a small number of cancerous cells in tissue samples that are collected from the cervix in standard Pap tests. The detection test is now entering a long-sought and exciting stage after many years of intense effort. With colleagues at the UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center Drs. Barrett and Frazer have initiated a clinical trial that intends to demonstrate their idea that a routine gynecological procedure already in widespread use can be leveraged to dramatically reduce the number of deaths due to ovarian cancer.

The Frazer Lab has a number of active research projects related to finding cures and treatment options for a variety of cancers and cardiovascular disease. The lab director, Kelly Frazer, is a world-renowned leader in the field of Genomics with over three decades of experience in research. As director, she contributes both to the knowledge database of the human genetic sequence, while...

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AFFILIATION

 University of California, San Diego

EDUCATION

- Kelly Frazer, Ph.D., in Genetics, 1993, University of California, San Francisco, B.A., in Chemistry/Biology, 1983, University of California, Santa Cruz
- Christian Barrett, Ph.D., in Computer Science (Bioinformatics), 2001, University of California, Santa Cruz, M.Sc., in Computer Engineering, 1998, University of California, Santa Cruz, B.A., in Physics, 1992, University of Colorado at Boulder

RESEARCH AREAS

Life Science, Diagnostics, Genomics / Congenital, Oncology / Cancer

FUNDING REQUEST

Your contributions will improve the effectiveness of the early ovarian cancer detection method and speed the translation of this research into clinical use. Support is crucially needed in order to continue and expand the clinical trial examining the effectiveness of the early ovarian detection method. Funding is also needed to expedite the completion of much needed discovery experiments; experiments to identify additional valuable diagnostic RNA molecules will increase the effectiveness of our screening method.

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