Global Dream Team to Launch Stomach Cancer Prevention Clinical Trial

Stand Up To Cancer (SU2C) and Cancer Research UK will test a way to make early gastric tumors easier to identify during endoscopies.

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Stand Up To Cancer (SU2C) and Cancer Research UK announced today new support for a dream team focused on stopping gastric cancer in its earliest stages. The extended funding for the SU2C Gastric Cancer Interception Dream Team will allow this leading group of researchers to build on the success of their earlier SU2C-funded studies, including launching a clinical trial that will test a novel way of making early gastric tumors much easier to identify during endoscopy procedures.

The potential impact of this research is vast. Worldwide, gastric cancer is the fifth most common type of cancer and third leading cause of cancer-related death, claiming more than 750,000 lives each year. By 2040, the number of people diagnosed with gastric cancer is expected to increase by more than 60%, to nearly 1.8 million diagnoses each year.

Initially formed in 2020, this Stand Up To Cancer dream team includes leading institutions in the United States, United Kingdom, and South Korea, reflecting a truly global effort to improve early detection of gastric cancer. For its next phase, the team will receive an additional $3 million in funding. The research is backed by Stand Up To Cancer and Cancer Research UK as part of their longstanding strategic partnership. In the United Kingdom, Cancer Research UK raises funds under its Stand Up To Cancer campaign to advance collaborative international research.

This next chapter of the team's work is also made possible thanks to the generosity of the Cless Family Foundation, the Sara Schottenstein Foundation, Swim for Sara, and the Torrey Coast Foundation. The team will further benefit from a commitment of technology and services from Lumicell, Inc.

"The extension of this team's funding reflects the extraordinary progress they've made in shifting our organizations' approach to gastric cancer—from focusing on treatment to focusing on true interception," said Julian Adams, PhD, president and CEO of Stand Up To Cancer. "Their work exemplifies SU2C's mission to drive bold, collaborative research that reaches people as early as

possible in their cancer journey and saves lives. We're proud to continue supporting this team as they move critical early-stage detection strategies closer to clinical use."

""Finding new ways to detect cancer earlier is key to bringing about a world where people live longer, better lives, free from the fear of cancer," said Talisia Quallo, PhD, head of prevention and early detection at Cancer Research UK. "We're pleased to support the dream team's efforts in developing technologies and strategies to detect gastric cancer at earlier stages, with a focus on higher-risk patient populations. It is exciting that some of the developed tools can now be tested in a clinical trial, and we look forward to seeing how this work progresses."

Led by Andrew Chan, MD, MPH, chief of the Clinical and Translational Epidemiology Unit and a gastroenterologist at the Mass General Brigham Cancer Institute, the team's initial SU2C-funded research tested new imaging tools and identified promising early warning signs of gastric cancer.

"This funding extension is not just about continuing great science. It's about fundamentally changing how we detect and stop gastric cancer," said Dr. Chan. "We're entering a critical moment where precision tools for early detection are becoming real options for patients. By focusing on developing minimally invasive methods for identifying tumors in their earliest, least lethal forms, we have a chance to shift outcomes dramatically while also creating a model for intercepting other cancers as well."

This international effort focuses on people with higher risk of gastric cancer, including those who live in Asia and Latin America, where the disease is more prevalent. The research will also include a special focus on people who have inherited genetic changes—including those in the CDH1 gene—that significantly increase their chances of developing diffuse gastric cancer, an aggressive subtype of the disease.

The team's goal is to detect and even stop gastric cancer before it starts, addressing a major gap in care: Many people are not diagnosed until the disease has already advanced, when the 5-year survival rate drops to just 6%.

Building On a Track Record of Innovation

Previous research by this team united leading scientists and clinicians in a groundbreaking collaboration. Together, they built the largest centralized global biobank of blood, tissue, and stool samples from individuals with early-stage gastric cancer or precancerous lesions to fuel ongoing research and collaboration.

The team has also developed advanced lab models of gastric cancer to identify early signals in blood and stool, including links between gut bacteria and cancer risk, and tested imaging tools to highlight tumors in real time during procedures.

With this extended funding, the dream team will:

- Initiate a clinical trial using fluorescence-guided endoscopy (pFGE), an imaging platform developed with Lumicell that uses a fluorescent optical imaging agent, a specialized near-infrared flexible probe, and real-time software to help doctors spot gastric tumors more sensitively and clearly during endoscopy procedures.

- Refine and validate a blood biomarker called ORF1p, which appears in more than 95% of stomach and esophageal cancers, to support earlier detection and treatment.

- Expand research on stool-based biomarkers and the gut microbiome to better understand which biological signals point to early disease and identify people at the highest risk of this cancer.

For the first time, these technologies will potentially make it possible to identify gastric cancer earlier, when it is more treatable.

Beyond Gastric Cancer: A Path for Other Cancers

While the team's primary focus is gastric cancer, the technologies being developed—especially blood-based biomarkers and molecular imaging—may also help detect other digestive tract cancers, including esophageal, colon and pancreatic cancers. Some tools could even apply to lung cancer detection in the future.

About Stand Up To Cancer

Stand Up To Cancer® (SU2C) raises awareness and funds research to detect and treat cancers with the aspiration to cure all patients. SU2C is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization and was initially launched as a division of the Entertainment Industry Foundation. Established in 2008 by media and entertainment leaders, SU2C utilizes these communities' resources to engage the public in supporting a new, collaborative model of cancer research, to increase awareness about cancer prevention, and to highlight progress being made in the fight against the disease. As of April 2025, more than 3,100 scientists representing more than 210 institutions are involved in SU2C-funded research projects.

The American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) is SU2C's scientific partner. A Scientific Advisory Committee, led by William G. Nelson, MD, PhD, conducts rigorous competitive review processes to identify the best research proposals to recommend for funding, oversee grants administration, and provide expert review of research progress.

Current members of the SU2C Founders and Advisors Committee (FAC) include Katie Couric, Sherry Lansing, Kathleen Lobb, Lisa Paulsen, Rusty Robertson, Sue Schwartz, Pamela Oas Williams, and Ellen Ziffren. The late Laura Ziskin and the late Noreen Fraser are also co-founders. Julian Adams, PhD, serves as SU2C's president and CEO.

For more information visit StandUpToCancer.org, Instagram, TikTok, X, Facebook, and YouTube.

About Cancer Research UK:

1. Cancer Research UK is the world's leading cancer charity dedicated to saving lives through research, influence and information.

2. Cancer Research UK has been at the heart of the progress that has already seen survival in the UK double in the last 50 years.

3. Today, 2 in 4 people survive their cancer for at least 10 years. Cancer Research UK wants to accelerate progress and see 3 in 4 people surviving their cancer by 2034.

4. Cancer Research UK supports research into the prevention and treatment of cancer through the work of over 4,000 scientists, doctors and nurses.

5. Together with its partners and supporters, Cancer Research UK is working towards a world where people can live longer, better lives, free from the fear of cancer. Cancer Research UK's pioneering work into the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer has helped save millions of lives.

For further information about Cancer Research UK's work or to find out how to support the charity, please call 0300 123 1022 or visit www.cancerresearchuk.org. Follow us on Twitter and Facebook.

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http://beta.docker.cancerhealth.com/article/global-dream-team-launch-stomach-gastric-cancer-prevention-clinical-trial