Australasian Society of Clinical and Experimental Pharmacologists and Toxicologists

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TUMOURS ON STEROIDS: SHOUD I STRAY OR SHOULD I SLOW?

Researchers at the University of Melbourne have found that some steroids could actually slow down the processes that are needed for cancer cells to travel to other organs. This discovery may result in treatments with a more positive outcome for breast cancer patients.

These steroids are commonly used to suppress the immune response and reduce inflammation in people with asthma and allergies. They are also given to patients with breast cancer to help reduce nausea and protect non-cancer cells from the effects of chemotherapy.

Breast cancer is the second most common cancer in Australian women, with a 1 in 11 at risk of developing breast cancer before the age of 75. Death from breast cancer is most commonly due to secondaries, usually in the bones or lungs.

"Until very recently, there has been little research carried out on the effects of these steroids on the tumour cells themselves.

"This research has discovered that the migration and invasion of breast cancer cells is slowed and this provides hope for new treatments. It is still early days and further research on tumour growth and spread is necessary before new treatments can be developed," says Ebony Fietz, a PhD student conducting the research.

This research will be presented at the Australasian Society of Clinical and Experimental Pharmacologists and Toxicologists (ASCEPT) Annual Scientific Meeting.

National and international leaders in pharmacology and toxicology are meeting in Perth between the 4th and 7th December 2011 to discuss the latest research on drugs and chemical safety.

The program of plenary lectures, symposia and workshops, oral presentations and posters will be academically and scientifically stimulating and lead to new collaborations and research opportunities. Annual awards and prizes will also be presented at this meeting.

Ends.

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