LIONS CANCER INSTITUTE (Inc)

A Project of Lions Western Australia

ANNUAL REPORT 1996-1997

LIONS CANCER INSTITUTE (INC)
Perth, Western Australia

LIONS CANCER INSTITUTE (Inc.)

Board of Directors: 1996 - 1997

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District Governor Colin Beauchamp JP

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Lion Prof. Bruce Gray
Director, Centre for Applied Cancer Studies
University of Western Australia

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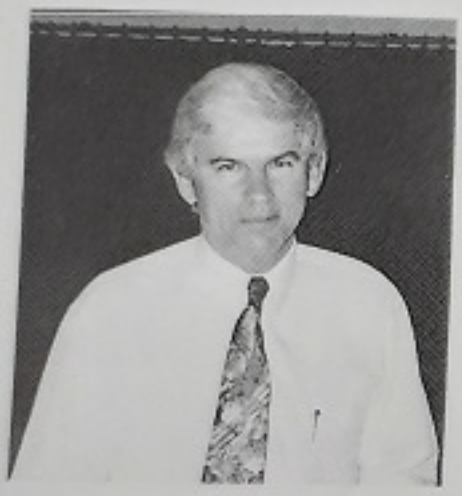

Phil Chinnery

George Garton

PDG Garry Irvine

Directors

Immediate Past District Governor Jeff Needham

Past District Governor Garry Irvine

District Chairman (Cancer) Kerrol Gildersleeve

Lion George Garton

Lion Phil Chinnery

Dr Stephen Jones

A commitment to the fight against Cancer....."

The *Lions Cancer Institute (Inc.)* was established in September 1990 by Lions in District 201W2, Western Australia, as a commitment to the fight against Cancer. The Institute remains a project of that District, but also enjoys considerable support from Lions Clubs in the sister District 201W1 - the Lions Clubs of W.A. have provided a guarantee of ongoing support for the Institute for the years ahead.

The *Lions Cancer Institute* is situated on Level 2 of the Medical Research Foundation building of Royal Perth Hospital, and is an incorporated body with charitable trust exemption - this means that all donations are fully tax deductible. The Institute is governed by a Board comprising elected representatives from Lions Clubs International District 201W2 and Staff members, and is associated with the University of Western Australia in the *Centre for Applied Cancer Studies* at the university.

Cancer is the second most common cause of death in Australia with approximately 30,000 people dying annually. While the death rates from heart and cardiovascular disease have continued to fall in recent years, the rate for cancer has risen by approximately 10% in the last ten years. It has been estimated that, in Australia, 1 in 3 males and 1 in 4 females will develop Cancer by the age of 75.

Research is the only way to find the answers that will allow us to overcome this disease. To make a meaningful contribution towards achieving this goal, Lions Clubs joined forces with a team of Scientists and Medical personnel from the University of Western Australia and Royal Perth Hospital to establish the Lions Cancer Institute (Inc.). Our Institute staff continues to liaise with other groups throughout the world. The record of achievement of our group of scientists and medical personnel is now widely recognised, and there is no doubt that the Institute will continue to develop into a world class facility.

Our 1996-1997 Annual Report contains outlines of our progress in a number of fields during that year; together with other work being conducted within the University of Western Australia Centre for Applied Cancer Studies. It is important to stress that the *Lions Cancer Institute (Inc.)* has minimal administration staff, with a large percentage of administration work provided on a voluntary basis by Lions Club members - all donations are directed to the research effort.

We are delighted to show interested groups around the facilities, and we are happy to provide speakers for interested groups. Facilities are also available for Lions Clubs to hold Dinner meetings incorporating a tour of the Institute.

Further details may be obtained from:

Lions Cancer Institute (Inc).
Level 2, Royal Perth Hospital Medical Research Foundation Building,
50 Murray Street, Perth 6000

(Postal) GPO Box F308, Perth W.A. 6001
Telephone (08) 9224 0200 Facsimile (08) 9224 0279

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - 1996-97

Immediate Past District Governor Colin Beauchamp J.P.

May I first express my thanks to the City of Bunbury Lions Club for again hosting this AGM of the Lions Cancer Institute, and to the staff, Lions and Guests who have taken the time to come here tonight in support of the work we at the Institute are doing. Thank you also for having allowed me to act as your chairman for the past year.

Once again funding seems to have been the priority for your board members during the last year, and so it should be. The specialised research being undertaken at the Institute is expensive, and considering the gains we have made in that research it is important that our scientists can continue.

To achieve the goals set by your Medical Director it was necessary for the Institute to obtain the services of the best scientists in each field. I believe that we have been able to achieve that with the current staff.

Your Institute has also been able to assist with the funding of one postgraduate scholarship through the University, and we hope to fund a further scholarship during the coming year. Other students have also assisted their studies and our projects during the year.

Donations and funds raised from the public and Lions clubs for the 1996 – 1997 financial year totalled over $[illegible], including the donations from our Williams River fundraising and the Lions Christmas card project, also a substantial donation from the Lion Charity Achiever Quest. These funds included those set aside for the Karen Chinnery Scholarship.

Your Institute was fortunate to receive a $475,000 grant from the Lions Clubs International Foundation, enabling us to purchase a sophisticated computer system which is featured on our centre pages, this equipment is to be used to advance the molecular biology research program under the supervision of Dr. Elizabeth Williams. Since arrival, it has become apparent that this equipment will also greatly assist the progress of the hyperthermia project.

I would again this year recognise the efforts of board member Phil Chinnery from Armadale/Kelmscott club. Phil has worked very hard looking at ways to increase the fundraising profile of the Institute.

My thanks to all of those clubs in our District 201W2 that donated funds this year, and we have also had many donations from 201W1 clubs, including some healthy donations through the Kingsley Woodvale Club from 'Granny Pat'.

All of the scientists involved in work at the Institute have provided reports on their progress in this report, including those funded by our affiliated group the Cancer Research Institute.

I must acknowledge the amount of work that all of the Staff do outside of their normal research in conducting tours of the Institute, especially Jillian Winter who acts as our tour guide.

My year as District Governor for District 201W2 has now ended and I am now able to concentrate on establishing a capital base for the Institute to ensure that the valuable work there continues into the future.

Thank you all for your support tonight and through the past year, a special thanks to my wife Sue for her support and to RN Jane Walker from Fremantle Hospital who helped with most screenings, also a special thank you to Mr Alister Turner FRCS FRACS and his fellow Plastic Surgeons for their ongoing support and input into the skin cancer screening program.

[illegible] BEAUCHAMP (JP)

Secretary/Treasurer's Report

PDG Ron Vaughan

There is little to report from the secretarial point of view other than that the affairs of the Institute have been conducted in accord with the requirements of our Constitution and those of State Law. Whilst the majority of our administrative work has been carried out on a voluntary basis, I must gratefully acknowledge the assistance received from Sally Wright and Katherine Jane during the past year. There are some things, such as answering the telephone, which just have to be done on the premises; and the ladies concerned have been very helpful in this area.

I also wish to acknowledge the support I have received from my wife Lion Eileen – in particular she was responsible for handling most of the administrative work connected with our 1996/97 Christmas card project.

Perhaps the highlight of the year was the success of our submission to the Lions Clubs International Foundation seeking funding of around $75,000 for the purchase of specialised computer imaging equipment for our molecular biology project. This project has been the subject of some years work by our Research Fellow, Dr Elizabeth Williams and her team, and had reached a stage requiring substantial equipment investment to allow the work to continue. We are extremely fortunate to have obtained such a grant, which can only be obtained by demonstrating that the sponsoring Lions Clubs International District has provided/is providing at least the same amount of support to the project. I am glad to say that we were easily able to satisfy that requirement.

I must make rather more comment on financial matters. As I prepare this report, our books are being audited, and a copy of this audit will be made available to you separately together with the Auditor's report.

Following taking over the financial affairs of the Institute just prior to the last AGM, I commented that we were concerned at some confusion which had arisen during the transfer of our staff to the University of WA following the setting up of the Centre for Applied Cancer Studies at the University.

As a result, and following a lengthy investigation, it was found that we had inadvertently been responsible for the salary of a staff member who was properly the responsibility of other funding. Despite a number of representations to the University accounts department, this problem continued throughout the financial year, and in fact was only corrected by way of credits during May/June 1997. For this reason we had a large "on paper" liability to the University at the end of the financial year on March 31st 1997, as we had been forced to withhold payments until the problem was resolved. That liability was in fact substantially exceeded by the value of credits received during May/June 1997 that related solely to transactions within the financial year under consideration.

Our accountants are currently considering how this situation can be treated within the relevant accounting standards so as to fairly represent our situation at the end of the year. I will be in a position to comment further on this matter at the AGM.

This year we are also presenting the result of two years operation of our Christmas card project, as a result of which we have been able to transfer $25,000 to our research funds, leaving some trading capital for the 1997 Christmas season. This project has been a valuable contribution to our income, and it is hoped that Clubs will again support us. Our largest single income contribution was from the 1995/96 Charity Achiever's Quest, which added $27,446 to our funds during the year, and it is regrettable that this project will terminate later in the present year.

Of course, our major source of funds has been, as always, donations from Clubs, which totaled some $63,756.

We have been greatly assisted in this regard by the Armadale Kelmscott and Bull Creek Clubs, each of which have made substantial long-term annual commitments to Institute funding. It is perhaps invidious to mention individual donations, for each donation is greatly appreciated; but we should also specially acknowledge donations totaling nearly $5000 from the Leeuwin Club and $6300 from Busselton.

We are also grateful for some generous donations from Clubs in our sister district 201W1; amongst which is $2000 from Whitfords and $4785 from Kingsley-Woodvale and Granny Pat's fundraising activities. We also received some $7492 from private sources.

Taken overall, we are close to "break – even" for the year, but in order to continue our work it is essential that Clubs continue to support us. We continue to seek alternative funding, but we really rely on the Lions Clubs of Western Australia for survival.

It should perhaps be explained that the Grant from LCIF and the related expenditure does not appear in our accounts, since the grant must operate from Lions District 201W2 control in accordance with Lions Clubs International Foundation requirements.

Ron Vaughan PDG.

DISTRICT CHAIRMAN 201W2 (CANCER) REPORT
Kerrol Gildersleeve

Having served as a representative to the Cancer Institute for the past two years, firstly as a Liaison Lion and last year as a Director, I was delighted when District Governor Tim Irvine asked me to take on the position of District Chairman for Cancer, thus giving me a third year to work for the Institute, this time as the chief line of communication between the clubs and the LCI.

I have watched with interest the work being done by our scientific team; the time and talent they have given to this vital research and I have listened to the reports of our Treasurer as he has acknowledged the many donations made by supporting clubs and individuals. As wonderful as it all has been, it just never seems enough. It will never be enough while loved ones and friends still fall victim to this insidious disease.

My charge for this year will be to deliver to you as much information on the workings and achievements of the LCI staff as possible, and to unfold to you their future plans and aspirations. To encourage you to continue your financial support of the Institute and to continually look for new ways to further increase the now of funds needed for the fight. We are a vital part of a worldwide war on cancer and there will be times when we despair as the burden of our task appears too great, but although it may take years, we will win.

I will be using as many of the means of communication available to me as possible, including letters to your Foundations Chairman for discussion and publication in your club bulletin, articles in *West Lion* and most importantly, personal visits to your club - please invite me. Our Board Chairman, PDG Colin Beauchamp and myself are happy to meet personally with clubs and make a presentation of our work and how you can become involved. If it's not possible for us to come to you Colin and I would like to invite your club to come to us. Visits to the Institute are always welcome, just a quick phone call to our secretary, PDG Ron Vaughan and it will be arranged we have facilities for a dinner meeting in the Royal Perth Hospital staff canteen if required.

I look forward to working with you all in this new Lions year. If the Lions Cancer Institute has not previously been a priority for your club I encourage you to give me the opportunity to speak with you - because Cancer Research needs your support.

Report from our Medical Director

Professor Bruce Gray *(Director: Centre for Applied Cancer Studies University of WA)*

It is again a pleasure to report on the progress made in the Lions Cancer Institute over the past year.

The last year has seen considerable change and refinement in the activities of the Institute. We have successfully bedded down the newly formed Centre for Applied Cancer Studies within the University and made substantial progress on a number of fronts.

On the administrative side Ms Katherine Jane has joined as the Administrative Officer for the Centre for Applied Cancer Studies. She is very ably looking after the interests of the Cancer Centre and dealing with the innumerable day to day events.

Mrs Sally Wright has been recruited as the Executive Officer of the Cancer Research Institute. Sally is spending most of her time working with the members of the Cancer Research Institute but is also providing valuable assistance to the LCI. Elizabeth Williams continues as the Lions Research Fellow on her project involving the biochemistry and molecular biology of cancer. Steve Jones continues to drive the hyperthermia project forward and I have been principally involved with Clinical Trials.

Unfortunately we have been unable to continue funding Mr Paul Katris who had been involved in running the skin cancer screening program for three years. Unfortunately the funds simply did not allow for his continued employment. However, Colin and Sue Beauchamp have redoubled their efforts and together with the huge support from the Western Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons, the skin cancer screening program continues. When funds allow we would hope to re-employ a full-time person to run this program and to analyse the very large amount of data being generated from it. This has been a hugely successful program and it was with a great deal of soul searching that we had to terminate the only paid employee working on the project due to financial constraints.

Two new doctoral students have joined the Institute and are undertaking studies together with Dr Elizabeth Williams towards their respective PhDs. Ms Jillean Winter continues to provide invaluable assistance to virtually everybody in the Institute. She is primarily assisting Stephen Jones with the hyperthermia project but is always there as a backstop when others need assistance.

The hyperthermia project has been in need of substantial funds in order to take it to the next phase of development. Consequently and after a great deal of discussion, it has been possible to solicit industry funding to develop this project into what will hopefully be a commercial entity. A company, Paragon Medical Limited has been formed and venture capital funding has been obtained for the hyperthermia project and the Yttrium and Controlled Release projects on which I have been working for the past fifteen years. This will provide an opportunity of not only promoting the research, but will also feed back valuable funds into the research effort. This in turn will help provide the much needed capital base on which our future will eventually be secured.

In the area of clinical trials, these have progressed well. The major international study involving adjuvant chemotherapy in patients undergoing resection of liver cancer has now been completed. Results of this study will be available in approximately two years. I would predict that this study will clearly demonstrate that a new form of treatment which we have helped develop will be shown to be effective in patients undergoing liver surgery for cancer and this will then become a standard treatment throughout the world. New trials are being developed and we would expect to promote a major Australasian study within the next six months. This will involve participation of many centres throughout Australia and New Zealand in a study to assess a new form of treatment for patients who have secondary bowel cancer.

The reports of the individual scientists are included and will provide greater detail on their particular studies.

On behalf of the Institute and everybody associated with it, our immense gratitude goes out to all of the Lions who have contributed to the Institute over the past year.

LCIF Grant assists Molecular Biology Project

The recent $75,000 grant received from Lions Clubs International Foundation has allowed the Institute to purchase a Silicon Graphics octane workstation and Molecular Simulations Insight II computer molecular modeling environment for biochemicals along with input/output devices and training. In addition, we have been able to purchase the Brookhaven Protein Databank collection of co-ordinate files containing structural data for all protein structures in the public domain.

Our Research fellow, Dr Elizabeth Williams, has been working for some years on advanced molecular biology research which it is hoped will lead to new strategies in anti cancer treatment, and the new equipment, *(see R)*, will enable more rapid progress to be made. Dr Williams comments: "Research in our Molecular Biology laboratory, for which we have had to use a number of processes in the past, can now move ahead much more efficiently using this new technology. Already the equipment is proving invaluable in our research, enabling us to model the structures of mutant CKS proteins that we have created in the laboratory and whose biological functions we are testing. We are able to alter the primary structures of our molecules and the computer calculates probable alterations in the three-dimensional array of atoms according to energy minimization principals.

Some idea of the complexity of the data processing being undertaken can be understood by appreciating that just one stage of this function takes the new computer equipment around twelve hours to process. Data is fed into the system during an afternoon and results are completed in the early morning. We are able to use thermal dynamics, in which the vibrational energies of the atoms are increased by "heating" the molecule to 900° Kelvin before being equilibrated back to physiological temperatures, to sample the range of probable structures that result from mutational experiments. This enables us to design further laboratory experiments to test the important atomic interactions within the CKS protein.

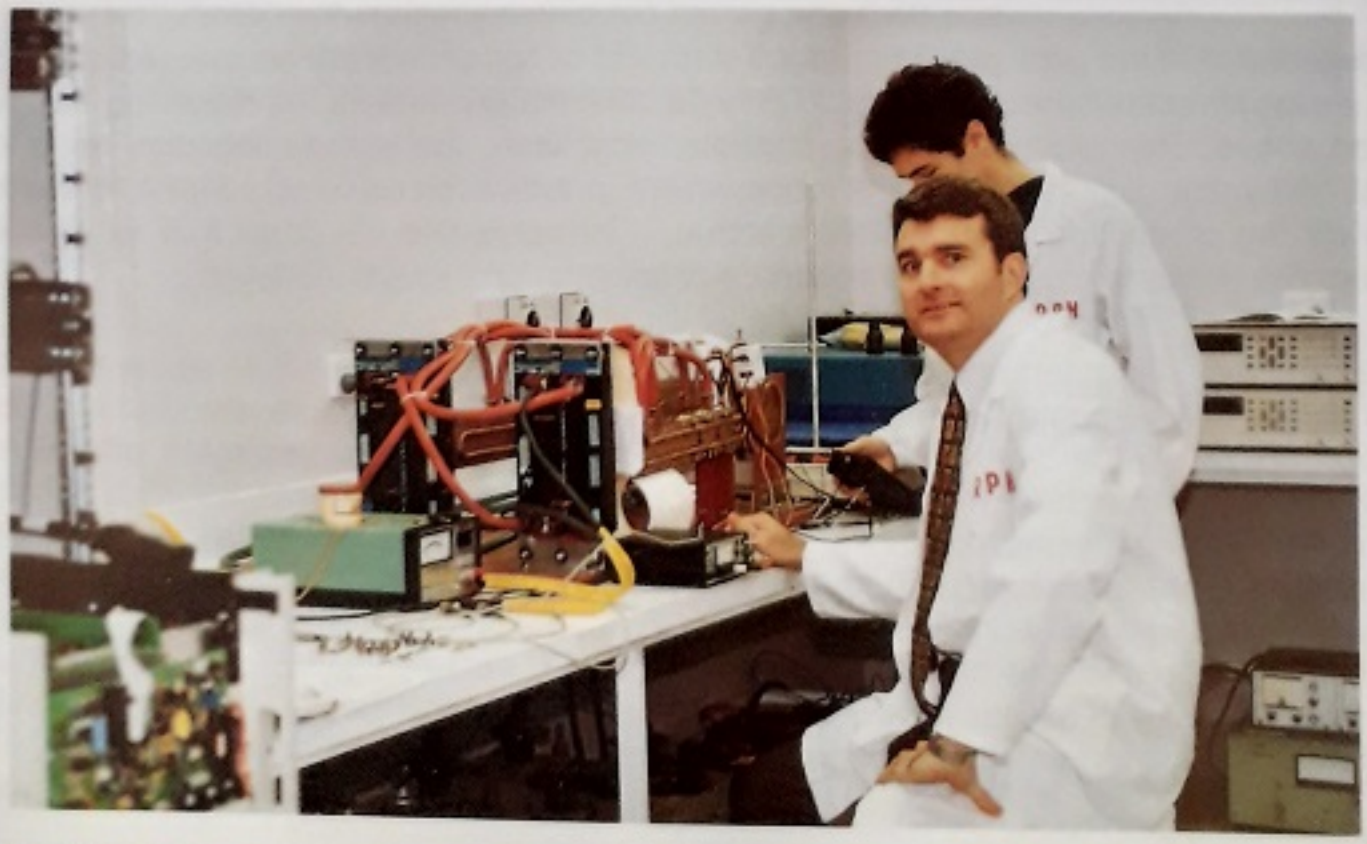
In the near future we will be embarking on the crystallization of intermolecular complexes formed between CKS molecules and the antibodies that neutralize their biological function. After using X-Ray diffraction studies to assign the atomic co-ordinates of the atoms within these complexes we will use the Modeling Facility to visualize and analyze the three-dimensional structures of the proteins in the complex and to determine the intermolecular forces that are responsible for the functional ablation of CKS protein *in vivo*. The new Molecular Modeling Facility has already proved to be invaluable in this work and vastly broadens the scope of the research that we can undertake at the Lions Cancer Institute."

(Above) Research Assistant Yetunde Ogunkoya, funded by our Williams River Fundraising project, assists Dr Williams.

Dr Elizabeth Williams with the new computer imaging equipment at the Lions Cancer Institute, with a protein model on the screen.

For the technically inclined, the equipment comprises a Silicon Graphics Octane/SI 175MHz processor with a 1MB cache and 128MB RAM. Internal 4mm SCSI tape and 3.5" 9GB SCSI disc drives are fitted, supplemented by an external 12X CD ROM SCSI drive. Other equipment for the installation includes an Epson type 1520 inkjet stylus colour printer and an HP Scanjet flatbed colour scanner. The cost of specialised molecular simulation and protein database software accounted for over 40% of the grant provided by Lions Clubs International Foundation.

One unexpected bonus received from our acquisition of the new computer imaging equipment is the possibility of using advanced Computer Aided Design (CAD) software to build and test "virtual" machines on the computer. This capability will also be of great assistance to Dr Stephen Jones and his associates in the continuing work on his targeted Hyperthermia project, and will allow the optimization of designs and evaluation of performance before actually expending the significant funds required for building the real version.



Our Physicist, Dr Steven Jones seen with prototype equipment for the targeted hyperthermia project

BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY LABORATORY

Dr Elizabeth A. Williams, Research Fellow, Lions Cancer Institute

The research and development program of the Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Laboratory, aimed at the development of a new and novel way to selectively eliminate tumour cells, is best described by the flowchart reproduced opposite.

In the past year most of our efforts have been focused on further development of our biological model system (Stage 4) to increase its sensitivity. We presented details of this yeast based genetic system for assessment of biological activities at the West Australian Combined Biological Sciences Meeting held at Fremantle in 1996.

The system now provides us with the capacity to assess the activity of our antibody molecules at four different concentrations within the live yeast cell. We have assessed three antibody constructs in this system, two of which appear to be different fragments of the third. One fragment is inactive while the other two constructs possess anti-CKS protein activity. The two active forms will be tested further for their ability to reduce the growth rate of cultured tumour cells before being assessed for therapeutic activity in mice with melanoma.

The Lions International Foundation has provided us with a US$50,000 grant to develop a facility with which we can undertake rational drug design. This consists of a Silicon Graphics Octane workstation and the Molecular Simulations Insight II software package with which we can view, analyse and model molecular structures in three-dimensional space. In addition, it provides us with the ability to design chemical compounds according to structural requirements for specific drug activities. This Computer-Aided Design technology is a new and exciting challenge for the Laboratory and we will be undergoing some further training in order that we will be able to fully utilise all its features.

Determination of the genetic structure of the three antibody genes will be undertaken in the next few months. This will provide us with the information required to build models of the protein structures they encode. Since we have already identified at a macroscopic level that part of the CKS proteins which is bound by the active antibodies, we will be well placed to consider detailed modelling of the interaction and use this to define the parameters for our drug designs.

We endeavoured in the past year to produce sufficient of our genetically engineered antibodies to attempt X-ray diffraction studies that could provide confirmatory data for the modelling experiments described above. This proved not to be possible, most likely due to the antibodies being toxic in bacterial and yeast cells. While this is inconvenient in that it forces us to adopt a less attractive strategy for the production of equivalent material, it indicates that the drugs that we develop will have potential alternative uses in the treatment of bacterial and fungal diseases.

The 1996-97 year has been one of change in the Laboratory. Our first PhD student, Ms Angela Hartnett became Mrs Angela Carrello upon her marriage and later became a mother with the birth of her son Jesse. At the time of writing Angela is taking up her studies again after 8 months maternity leave. Early in 1997 we hosted two second year medical students, Ms June Sim and Ms Tanya Yuen, who had won vacation scholarships from the University of Western Australia to pursue six-week research projects. Both of these projects contributed significantly to our research program as did a two week work experience period undertaken by Ms Sharon Pickup. In March Mr Marcus Watkins, the awardee of the Lions Karen Chinnery PhD Scholarship, joined us. Marcus's project is concerned with assessment of the usefulness of gene therapies utilising the recombinant antibody genes in the treatment of experimental melanoma in an animal model.

The Lions Cancer Institute Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Program

Stage 1
Generation of antibody molecules that bind to different parts of the surface of the target CKS proteins.

⇩

Stage 2
Characterisation of the properties of these different antibodie in vitro.

⇩

Stage 3
Construction of synthetic genes encoding the antibodies of interest to enable testing for the desired biochemical activity, *in vivo*.

Stage 4
Design and construction of a biological system to test the biochemical activity of specific antibodies.

⇩ ⇩

Stage 5
Assessment of biochemical activity of selected antibodies in the biological test system; documentation of the behaviour of the test system.

⇩

Stage 6
Identification of antibody molecules having anti-CKS protein activity.

⇩ ⇩

Stage 7
Application of the bioactive antibody molecules as gene therapy agents in an animal tumour model.

Stage 8
Determination of the structure of the bioactive antibody and the way it binds the CKS target protein to inhibit its activity and bring about cell death

⇩ ⇩

Development of anti-CKS gene therapy

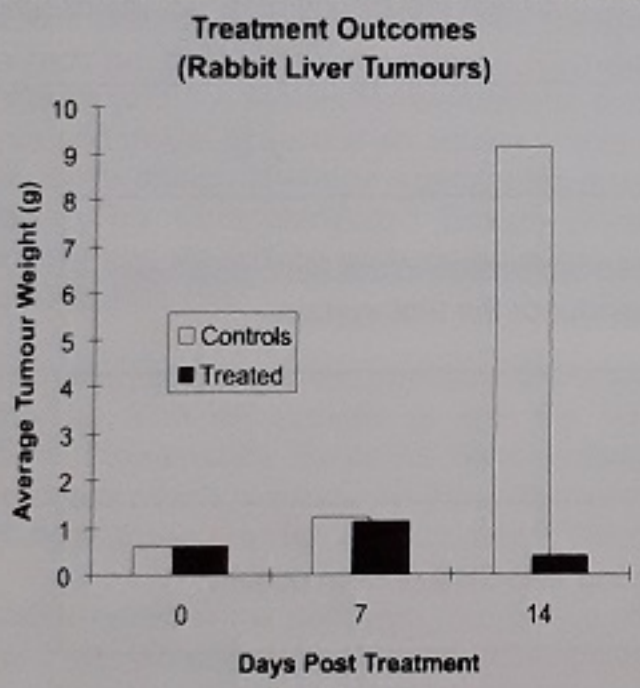
Development of anti-CKS drugs

The Targeted Hyperthermia Project

Dr Stephen Jones
Simon Harrison, PhD Student
Jillean Winter, Laboratory Assistant

The Targeted Hyperthermia Project is rapidly gathering momentum. For the past year or so we have been immersed in a series of animal tests designed to measure the effectiveness of this new therapy and to refine the various operational parameters to give optimum performance. These experiments are all but complete now and it is fair to say that the results have exceeded our expectations. We have shown that our process is clearly capable of heating cancerous tumours with negligible heating of surrounding healthy tissue and that this heating is very effective in actually destroying tumours.

These experiments were performed using specially bred rabbits in which we deliberately induced the growth of liver cancer. At the time of treatment the tumours were the size of a five cent piece. At this point we would perform a surgical operation in order to administer our specially formulated microspheres so that they end up in the tumour. We then inserted small fibre optic thermometer probes into the tumour and in nearby healthy tissue to allow us to monitor tissue temperatures throughout the procedure. The rabbit was then placed into our prototype machine designed to heat the microspheres and consequently heat the tumours. The power level of the machine was controlled so that the temperature inside the tumour was maintained at about 43°C for 30 minutes. Following this procedure the rabbits were recovered from anaesthetic and put back in their cages. Some time later the tumour sizes were measured and compared against tumours from rabbits that had not undergone treatment. The figure shows a comparison of treated tumour weights vs untreated control tumour weights at 7 days and 14 days after treatment day. After 14 days there is clearly a dramatic difference between the two groups.



Whilst these results are extremely encouraging there is obviously a big difference between treating cancer in small laboratory animals compared to treating humans. Our efforts are now entirely focussed on building a system to treat humans as quickly as possible. Unfortunately this involves a lot more than simply scaling up the system used for the animal experiments. It became clear from the rabbit work that we had to find a way to increase the heating efficiency of our microspheres. In other words we needed to find a way to produce more heat from less microspheres. Unless this could be achieved it would be very difficult to safely apply this system to the treatment of cancer in humans. With the aid of a grant from the Australian Research Council (ARC) we have been able to investigate one likely way of improving this efficiency. This pursuit of greater heating efficiency has become one of the major preoccupations of our PhD student Simon Harrison. This work so far appears to have yielded a unique method to improve the heating efficiency to the required level. Simon's work in this area may well provide still further improvements but with the information we already have we can now proceed with confidence toward development of the clinical machine.

The Silicon Graphics Octane workstation purchased by Dr Elizabeth Williams with the aid of the grant from the Lions Clubs International Foundation will be used to help design the clinical machine. Very advanced Computer Aided Design (CAD) software can be used to build and test a "virtual" machine on the computer. This will allow us to optimise the design and evaluate it's performance before actually expending the significant funds required to build the real version.

As well as the group actually working here at the Lions Cancer Institute we still continue to collaborate with other scientific groups within the hospital and university.
Susan Farrant, enrolled as a PhD student in the Department of Physics, has been investigating the possibility of microspheres that self regulate to a predetermined temperature and is soon to submit her thesis for examination by an international committee. Andrew Campbell from the Medical Physics Department here at Royal Perth Hospital is also part way through a Ph.D., which

is concerned with aspects of thermal dosimetry from this method of treatment. The next 12 months promises to be a very exciting period for this project. The efforts of the past 7 years or so are beginning to pay off. The prospect of finally reaching the stage of applying all our technology to the treatment of human cancer is extremely motivating. We all look forward to that day when we treat our first patient.

More personalities at the Institute

Katherine Jane

Sally Wright

Jillean Winter

Simon Harrison

Marcus Watkins

The Lions Cancer Institute Skin Screening Program

Colin Beauchamp

During 1996-1997, Lions Cancer Institute skin cancer screenings continued throughout Districts 201W1 and 201W2, with the ongoing support of the West Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons. During 1997, screenings have so far been held in Kardinya, Leeming, East Fremantle, North Perth and Claremont/Nedlands.

Referral rates again averaged over twenty percent (20%) which indicate that the selection criteria developed through research is correct. At one venue in the country late in last year, we reached the alarming rate of fifty four percent (54%) referrals.

Early indications from the research would seem to indicate a higher rate of incidence of suspect lesions in the non-metropolitan areas, We are not able to ascertain whether this is due in part to the lack of specialist facilities in the country areas, or to the differing lifestyles of some country residents. It would also seem to be indicated that where we have a 'retiring' population, the incidence could be expected to increase.

The 'Melanoma Project', which was funded through a Lions Multiple District 201 projectmentioned in our report to the last AGM is now nearing completion, and will terminate at the end of this year. Two south west towns have been selected to assist with this trial, one of which is to be covered by a special self screening brochure and then screened. The project required the design and testing of a 'self screening kit', which, if proven successful, will form part of the ongoing fight against skin cancer in Australia.

Your Institute still receives many more requests for screenings than our program can handle in a year, and unfortunately some clubs have to be disappointed. We rely on the West Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons to provide the expertise needed to ensure that these screenings continue to be successful. All our screening team are volunteers and it is not possible to organise more than one screening per month. Screenings to follow the 1997 AGM include Narembeen (20th September), Northam (18th October), Kojonup (15th November) and Bridgetown (6th December).

Thank you to all of the volunteer staff who helped to make this public service project a success.

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