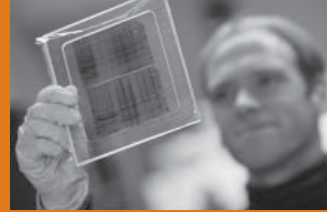


IMPACT OF PRIVATE SUPPORT



Fall 2009

Research update from Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center

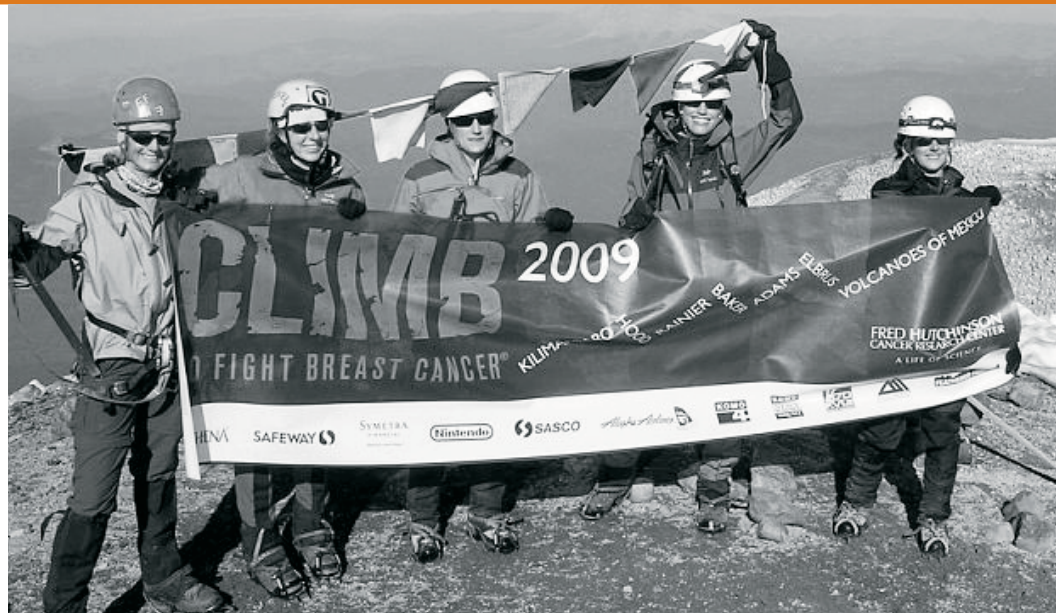
CLIMB TO FIGHT BREAST CANCER®

The Hutchinson Center appreciates the partnership and generosity of those who joined the Climb to Fight Breast Cancer.

“Great things are done when men and mountains meet,” wrote the poet William Blake. Whether man or woman, tackling a granite or metaphorical mountain, rising to meet a challenge brings out the best in all of us.

At Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center our world-class researchers face the mountainous challenge of eliminating cancer as a cause of suffering and death. They are inspired in their efforts by the remarkable scientists whose discoveries first brought the Hutchinson Center to the world’s attention, and they are supported by the Center’s environment of camaraderie and shared resources. And, as these

men and women of science strive to deepen our knowledge



Climbers summiting Mt. Adams

of illness and develop improved therapies, their individual successes are woven together to become a larger accomplishment.

Those who participate in the Climb to Fight Breast Cancer also become a part of this larger story, as the funding raised by the Climb plays a significant role in supporting research to prevent, detect and treat breast cancer. With generous donations such as those from the Climb, researchers are able to investigate promising new concepts that have the potential to significantly impact the fight against cancer.

There are many reasons to climb a mountain, just as there are many reasons to dedicate one’s life to research. In

either case, as Blake wrote, great things are done. Below are two examples of dedicated scientists whose important research benefits from your gifts.

CHIANTI OR CHARDONNAY—IT’S YOUR CHOICE

Dr. Polly Newcomb, head of the Center’s Cancer Prevention Program, identifies modifiable risk factors for common cancers, including breast cancer.

She recently conducted the largest study of its kind to evaluate the effect of red versus white wine on breast-cancer risk. The study showed that both wines are equal offenders when it comes to

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increasing breast-cancer risk.

“We were interested in teasing out red wine’s effects on breast-cancer risk,” said Dr. Newcomb. “The general evidence is that alcohol consumption overall increases breast-cancer risk, but other studies made us wonder whether red wine might in fact have some positive value.”

Instead, Newcomb and colleagues found no compelling reason to choose Chianti over Chardonnay.

“If a woman drinks, she should do so in moderation—no more than one drink a day,” Newcomb said. “And if a woman chooses red wine, she should do so because she likes the taste, not because she thinks it may reduce her risk of breast cancer.”

The researchers found that women who consumed 14 or more drinks per week, regardless of type (wine, liquor or beer), faced a 24 percent increase in breast cancer compared with non-drinkers.

Research such as Dr. Newcomb’s helps women learn the steps they can take to lower their risk of breast cancer. With

one question answered, Dr. Newcomb continues working on her many other projects, including studies of ways in which diet and lifestyle impact cancer risk and how quality of life is affected by breast-cancer recurrence.

MIGRAINES REDUCE BREAST-CANCER RISK

Dr. Christopher Li researches the causes and origins of breast cancer. His studies range from working to understand the relationship between hormone exposure and cancer risk to looking at disparities in cancer stage, treatment and survival by race and ethnicity.

Dr. Li recently garnered attention for his study confirming a reduction in breast-cancer risk for women with a history of migraines. This study found a 26 percent reduction in breast-cancer risk for both pre- and post-menopausal women with a clinical diagnosis of migraines.

A study published by Dr. Li last year established an initial relationship between migraines and breast-cancer risk levels. The more recent study expanded on the initial findings, making them more generalizable among women. Dr. Li also found that the risk reduction seemed independent of migraine “triggers” such as alcohol consumption, smoking and taking hormone replacement therapy.

The biological mechanisms behind the link are unclear, but Dr. Li is continuing his research on the relationship. Dr. Li noted that “this gives us a new avenue to explore.” His next step is a follow-up investigation among women from

the first study to look at the nature of the migraines in an attempt to find additional clues to the apparent protection conferred by the headaches.

THE IMPACT OF TAMOXIFEN ON RISK

While Dr. Li continues his work on migraines and breast-cancer risk, his other research doesn’t stop. Once again, Dr. Li has found himself in the public eye after publishing results from a study looking at the well-known breast-cancer drug tamoxifen. Some breast-cancer survivors use tamoxifen to reduce the chances of a breast-cancer recurrence. Dr. Li’s study found that tamoxifen is protective against the more common type of breast cancer, but that it notably increases the chance of a rarer, more aggressive breast cancer. Dr. Li’s results should help breast-cancer patients and their doctors determine the best course of action for their individual needs.

The ongoing research of scientists such as Drs. Li and Newcomb continues to help unravel the causes of breast cancer, as well as the therapies and prevention interventions that can best save lives. We thank you again for your efforts and your contributions to the Hutchinson Center’s fight to improve the lives of those with and at high risk for breast cancer.

There are many opportunities for joining studies at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center. For information, visit www.fhcr.org/donating/other/study.

For details on the 2010 Climb to Fight Breast Cancer, visit www.fhcr.org/climb.

