Old drug, new hope for deadliest cancer.


**Document Type:** Article

**Source:**

**Subject Terms:**
Pancreatic cancer -- Treatment
Stroke -- Treatment
Chemotherapy (Cancer)

**Abstract:**

The article discusses the effectiveness of stroke drug fasudil in increasing the average survival of a pancreatic cancer patients based on research conducted on mice.

IN BRIEF

A DRUG used to treat strokes significantly prolongs the lives of mice with pancreatic cancer.

In humans, pancreatic cancer has the worst survival rate of any major cancer. Chemotherapy is difficult because the tumours are protected by the stroma -- an armour of connective tissue, blood vessels and immune cells.

Now, Paul Timpson and Marina Pajic at the Garvan Institute of Medical Research in Sydney, Australia, and their team have shown that the stroke drug fasudil can weaken this stroma, making it easier for other drugs to get in.

Three days of fasudil treatment prior to chemotherapy increased survival time of mice with pancreatic cancer by 47 per cent (Science Translational Medicine, DOI: 10.1126/scitranslmed.aai8504). If this benefit translates to people, it would increase average survival from nine to 13 months. "It doesn't sound like much, but the baseline success for pancreatic cancer treatments is so low that any improvement is fantastic," says Timpson.
Fasudil was approved in Japan in 1995 and is no longer covered by a patent, meaning it is cheap. The team is now looking at trialling the drug in combination with chemotherapy in people with pancreatic cancer, says Pajic.