

## PRESS RELEASE

Wednesday 9 November, 2016

### MARKER FOR AGGRESSIVE PROSTATE CANCER DOUBLES-UP AS A DRUG TARGET

RESEARCHERS have discovered that a marker found on aggressive prostate cancer cells could also be used as a way to guide treatments to the cancer, according to new research\* presented at the National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) Cancer Conference in Liverpool.

The molecule, called NAALADL2, is already measured to see if prostate cancer is likely to return, but the new study has shown that it can also help direct treatment to the cancer.

The team, based at UCL, had already found that prostate cancer cells have more of the NAALADL2 molecule on their surface compared to cells from healthy tissue. Prostate cancer patients whose tumour cells have high levels of this molecule are more than twice as likely to see their disease return following surgery.

In the new study, the researchers attached the drug saporin to an antibody targeted against NAALADL2 to destroy prostate cancer cells in the lab.

Dr Hayley Luxton, lead researcher from the Molecular Diagnostics and Therapeutics Laboratory at University College London, said: "Using antibodies mounted with a toxic payload, we can exploit the fact that aggressive prostate cancer cells have more NAALADL2.

"The next step is to further develop this for use in patients, which we hope can be done in a relatively short timeframe."

Around 46,500 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer in the UK each year. And around 11,000 men will die from the disease each year.

The study was funded by The Urology Foundation, John Black Charitable Trust and Cancer Research UK.

Louise de Winter, CEO of The Urology Foundation, said: "This research was attractive to us as something that could potentially distinguish those so-called 'pussy cat' cancers from the 'tigers'. We're very excited by the potential shown and look forward to further findings."

Dr Chris Parker, Chair of the NCRI's Prostate Cancer Clinical Studies Group, said: "When it comes to aggressiveness, prostate cancer can either be slow-growing or much faster to grow and spread. And there is an urgent need to find better treatments for the more aggressive version of the disease.

"Interestingly, this study shows that the very marker that indicates a prostate tumour may be more aggressive, could also be the key to its downfall."

**ENDS**

For media enquiries contact Simon Shears in the NCRI press office on 0151 707 4642/3/4/5 or, out of hours, on 07050 264 059.

Notes to editor:

Abstract: <http://abstracts.ncri.org.uk/abstract/can-we-use-n-acetyl-l-aspartyl-l-glutamate-peptidase-like-2-to-target-drugs-to-cancer-cells-2/>

About the NCRI

The National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) is a UK-wide partnership of cancer research funders, established in 2001. Its 19 member organisations work together to accelerate progress in cancer-related research through collaboration, to improve health and quality of life.

NCRI Press Office

Angel Building  
407 St John Street  
London EC1V 4AD  
T: +44 (0)20 3469 8300  
T: +44 (0)7050 264 059  
(out of hours)  
E: [press@ncri.org.uk](mailto:press@ncri.org.uk)

[www.ncri.org.uk](http://www.ncri.org.uk)

NCRI works to coordinate research related to cancer, to improve the quality and relevance of the research and to accelerate translation of the research into clinical practice for the benefit of patients.

NCRI Partners are: Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council; Bloodwise; Breast Cancer Now; Cancer Research UK; Children with Cancer UK, Department of Health; Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC); Macmillan Cancer Support; Marie Curie; Medical Research Council (MRC); Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Public Health Agency (Research & Development Department); Pancreatic Cancer Research Fund; Prostate Cancer UK; Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation; Scottish Government Health Directorates (Chief Scientist Office); Tenovus Cancer Care; The Wellcome Trust; Welsh Assembly Government (Health and Care Research Wales); and Worldwide Cancer Research.

For more information visit [www.ncri.org.uk](http://www.ncri.org.uk)

#### About the NCRI Cancer Conference

The NCRI Cancer Conference is the UK's largest cancer research forum for showcasing the latest advances in British and international oncological research spanning basic and translational studies to clinical trials and patient involvement.

- The conference offers unique opportunities to network and share knowledge by bringing together world-leading experts from all cancer research disciplines.
- The NCRI Cancer Conference is taking place from 6-9 November 2016 at the BT Convention Centre in Liverpool.
- For more information visit [conference.ncri.org.uk](http://conference.ncri.org.uk); Twitter @NCRI\_Partners; #NCRI2016

#### About The Urology Foundation (TUF)

We are the only medical charity dedicated to improving the nation's urological health through the investment of cutting-edge research and the training and education of urology professionals.

Diseases and cancers of the kidneys, bladder, prostate and male reproductive organs are becoming more prevalent and devastating the lives of thousands of men, women and children in the UK and Ireland. TUF is committed to find better treatments and cures, and nurturing urology professionals to deliver better care and help to people affected by a urology condition.

The Urology Foundation – leading the fight against urology disease

The Urology Foundation can offer journalists:

- Expert views and opinions
- Urology health information
- Interviews and photo opportunities
- Case studies
- Campaign information

[theurologyfoundation.org](http://theurologyfoundation.org)

NCRI Press Office

Angel Building  
407 St John Street  
London EC1V 4AD  
T: +44 (0)20 3469 8300  
T: +44 (0)7050 264 059  
(out of hours)  
E: [press@ncri.org.uk](mailto:press@ncri.org.uk)

[www.ncri.org.uk](http://www.ncri.org.uk)