
Introductory Remarks

MolDiag-Paca: An Integrated Project Funded by the European Union for Postgenomic Pancreatic Cancer Research

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MolDiag-Paca is an Integrated Project (IP) funded by the European Union in the 'Sixth Framework Programme'. The major aim of MolDiag-Paca is to make use of genetic profiles of pancreatic cancer and precursor lesions to improve the outcome of pancreatic cancer patients by providing novel and highly efficient molecular diagnostic tools for an early diagnosis. A consortium comprising 19 partners from Germany, Estonia, Italy, Spain, Sweden, and the UK started to work on MolDiag-Paca in August 2006. The partners from both academia and industry have a long-standing interest and expertise in pancreatic cancer biology, diagnosis and treatment. Some of the partners have been cooperating in previous European pancreatic cancer networks for more than a decade, and have been involved in high-throughput analyses of genomic, transcriptomic, proteomic and epigenetic profiles of pancreatic cancer or preneoplastic lesions. A tangible result of the centralization of these efforts within the MolDiag-Paca project is the creation of a publicly available comprehensive pancreatic expression database (<http://www.pancreasexpression.org/>).

To achieve the IP's ambitious aims, a multidisciplinary consortium was composed facilitating a strong interaction between technology, biology and medicine to translate genome data into practical, clinical applications. The project thus involves molecular biologists, bioinformaticians, pathologists, epidemiologists, molecular oncologists, surgical and medical oncologists, radiologists and

nuclear medicine physicians. Since we expect to generate molecular diagnostic tools that will be ready for clinical applications in the course of the project, we have included a number of SMEs with a particular interest in developing molecular diagnostic tools and one partner from the pharmaceutical industry with an outstanding record in performing research on and developing and introducing in vivo diagnostic tools into the market.

Another major aim of MolDiag-Paca is to provide a training network for pancreatic cancer research to scientists and the scientific community without the limitations imposed by national frontiers. This is realized by short-term personnel exchanges, training courses and scientific meetings. Most notably, the consortium has recently organized highly successful teaching courses in clinical pancreatology (Stockholm, November 2007) and in the pathology of pancreatic tumors (Verona, May 2007). The pathology course is available as an e-learning course at <http://dp.univr.it/~moldiag/>.

This special section of *Pancreatology* will present the reader with a number of reviews and original articles summarizing some of the current concepts and developments that are being pursued by members of the MolDiag-Paca consortium. For additional, more detailed information on MolDiag-Paca please refer to the consortium's webpage at <http://www.moldiagpaca.eu/>.

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