

Pancreatic cancer projected to become Australia's third biggest cancer killer this year

3 June 2020 - for immediate release

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has released a report confirming pancreatic cancer is now projected to become the third most common cancer killer in Australia in 2020.

For the first time pancreatic cancer is projected to claim more lives than breast cancer and prostate cancer, and each year almost 4,000 people will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Approximately 80 per cent of patients diagnosed will die within 12 months and the disease has the lowest survival rates of all main cancer types.

Yet, despite these figures, pancreatic cancer trails behind other cancers when it comes to funding for research, receiving less than 8 per cent of the funding available.¹ In 2018 it was the 11th most funded cancer for research by the Australian government through the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

“We applaud the advances that have been made in other cancers and hope to replicate this success in pancreatic cancer”, says Michelle Stewart, CEO of Avner Pancreatic Cancer Foundation. “It is a devastating disease – difficult to diagnose, difficult to treat, and with very few early warning signs – and yet funding for research remains desperately low”. Michelle continued, “Investment in research is the only way that we will see an improvement in outcomes for people diagnosed with pancreatic cancer”.

Avner Foundation Co-Founder and Director Caroline Kelly says the improvement in survival rates to 10.7%, reaching double figures for the first time in history, is a step in the right direction. “We started Avner Pancreatic Cancer Foundation in 2007 when my husband Avner was diagnosed with this horrific disease, and the survival rate at that time was only 5.2%. Increases in survival are due to many clinicians, researchers and charities working together. The Avner Pancreatic Cancer Foundation and our supporters have worked tirelessly for 11 years, raising awareness and funds to channel into pancreatic cancer research, investing over \$7.6 million across 28 research projects at Australia’s top research institutions. We now need to push harder to ensure people diagnosed with pancreatic cancer have an equal chance of survival”, Caroline said.

Avner Pancreatic Cancer Foundation has a plan and focus to fast track pancreatic cancer research, documented in *Pancreatic Cancer: The Cancer of Our Generation* report, to accelerate new treatments for patients and ensure all Australian’s diagnosed with the disease receive the highest quality treatment. The organisation is committed to working closely with Cancer Australia on the National Pancreatic Cancer Roadmap, announced in February by the Federal Health Minister, Hon. Greg Hunt MP.

¹ Pancreatic cancer is the 11th most funded cancer for research by the Australian government through the National Health and Medical Research Council

About Avner Pancreatic Cancer Foundation

Avner Pancreatic Cancer Foundation is the only charity in Australia exclusively dedicated to pancreatic cancer with a mission to dramatically increase survival rates and quality of life for Australians impacted by the disease. We aim to achieve this through a strategic focus on raising awareness and investing in ground-breaking medical research.

For more detailed information, further commentary and case studies, please contact:

Kristjan Porm
Marketing & Communications Manager
kristjan@avnersfoundation.org.au
Ph. 0402 158726