CANCER CARE & RESEARCH

Prepared by

Michael Kent
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Radiation Oncology
Director, Center for Companion Animal Health (CCAH)

UCDAVIS
VETERINARY MEDICINE
Center for Companion Animal Health

THANK YOU

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me and for your interest in our oncology program. We are dedicated to delivering the highest level of comprehensive, compassionate care to our patients while also training the next generation of veterinarians and specialists.

Most importantly, we are committed to advancing the fight against cancer—both in animals and people. We achieve this by conducting cutting-edge research into the fundamental mechanisms of cancer and by running innovative clinical trials.

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OUR CLINICAL SERVICES

Medical Oncology

Radiation Oncology

Surgical Oncology

Diagnostic Imaging

CLINICAL CARE

Comprehensive Cancer Care for Our Patients and Their Families

At UC Davis, we strive to provide the most comprehensive cancer care possible, combining all available treatment modalities, including surgery, radiation, chemotherapy, and immunotherapy. Our team of specialists in each of these areas works collaboratively. Every case is reviewed holistically in our rounds, where experts discuss and develop the best treatment plan for each patient, which is then presented to the family.

We also lead the way in innovative care through clinical trials, offering treatments for some of the most challenging cancers—options that are not available anywhere else.

We understand that sometimes the best medical option may not align with a family's priorities. In these situations, we offer exceptional palliative care to ensure the highest quality of life for our patients, for as long as possible.

Compassionate care of the highest quality

OUR TEAM

Medical Oncology

Faculty

Amandine Lejeune, DVM, DACVIM (Oncology)
Associate Professor
Chief of Service (Medical Oncology)
Co-Director - House Officer Affairs Board

Katherine Skorupski, DVM, DACVIM (Oncology)
Professor (Medical Oncology)

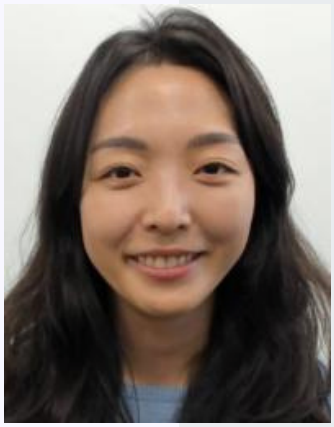
Rob Rebhun, DVM, PhD, DACVIM (Oncology)
Professor (Medical Oncology)
Co-Director - Veterinary Center for Clinical Trials
C0-Director - Center for Companion Animal Health

Sami Al-Nadaf, DVM, DACVIM (Oncology)
Assistant Professor (Medical Oncology)

Residents

Rachel Hanford, DVM
Resident I (Medical Oncology)

Kelsie Kermendy, DVM
Resident II (Medical Oncology)



Jaeyoung Kim, DVM
Resident II (Medical Oncology)

Evangelia Makrygiannis, DVM
Resident III (Medical Oncology)

Gabby Paul_Mckenzie, DVM
Resident III (Medical Oncology)

Anett Sczepanek, DVM
Resident I (Medical Oncology)

OUR TEAM

Radiation Oncology

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Director - Center for Companion Animal Health
Co-Program Leader - Comparative Oncology Program

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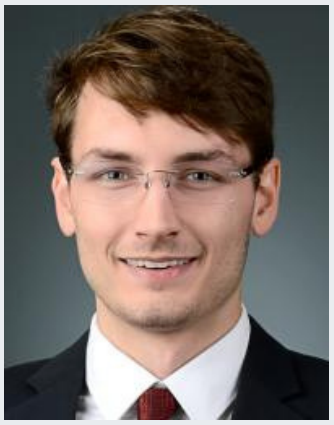
Professor (Radiation Oncology)

Lior Granot, DVM
Resident I (Radiation Oncology)



Matthias Rosseel, DVM
Resident III (Radiation Oncology)

Dentistry and Oral Surgery

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OUR TEAM

Surgical Oncology

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Philipp Mayhew, BVMS, DACVS
Professor

Michael Mison, DVM, DACVS
Professor, Associate Dean for Veterinary Medical Center Operations, Chief Veterinary Medical Officer

Michele A. Steffey, DVM, DACVS
Professor

Neurology / Neurosurgery

Peter Dickinson, BVSc, PhD, DACVIM
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Assistant Professor

Christine Toedebusch, DVM, PhD, DACVIM
Assistant Professor

OUR TEAM

Diagnostic Imaging

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Director - Imaging Services

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Assistant Professor - Chief of Service (Small Animal)

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Allison Zwingenberger, DVM, DACVR, DECVDI, MAS
Professor

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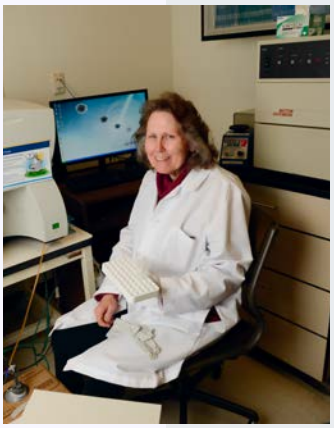
Xinbin Chen, DVM, PhD
Professor

Stephen McSorley, PhD
Professor

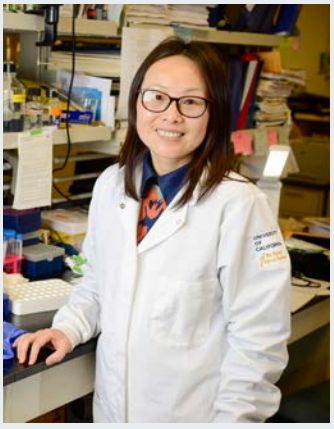


Ellen Sparger, DVM, PhD
Professor

Ryan Toedebusch, PhD
Associate Project Scientist

Luke Wittenburg, DVM, PhD
Associate Professor

Daniel York, PhD
Project Scientist



Jin Zhang, PhD
Assistant Research Scientist

CLINICAL TRIALS

Clinical trials are essential in determining whether a promising new drug or procedure is truly better than current treatments. They also help us establish safe and effective dosing, as well as identify any potential risks or toxicities associated with new therapies.

These trials are **prospective**, meaning we follow patients in real-time, gathering crucial data throughout the process. Each trial undergoes rigorous ethical and safety reviews to ensure it is as safe as possible. Higher-risk trials are reserved for patients who have no other viable treatment options, giving them a chance for hope when conventional therapies fall short.

Examples of Some of Our Clinical Trials: Advancing Cancer Treatment

Active - Recruiting

Evaluation of Novel Therapeutics for Brain Tumors

***This trial is for dogs with aggressive brain cancer whose owners have elected humane euthanasia. This trial does not provide treatment of your dog's cancer. *** This trial is testing a new way to treat brain tumors in dogs. The treatment will be injected into the...

Active - Recruiting

Characterization of naturally occurring osteosarcoma in dogs

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the outcomes for dogs treated palliatively with standard amputation (no chemotherapy). Recent data indicates that at least 35% of dogs do not appear to benefit from standard chemotherapy for this disease. To better understand...

Active - Recruiting

Evaluating new therapeutics for dogs with liver tumors

The purpose of this study is to try and improve our treatment options and outcomes associated with treatment in dogs with liver tumors. This particular study is focused on intravenous delivery of a substance (microbubbles/nanoparticles containing RNA) to a liver...

Active - Recruiting

Help investigators improve surgical precision for oral cancer surgery in dogs

Despite efforts to ensure complete removal of cancerous tissue, canine patients still experience high rates of residual disease and local recurrence. For specific tumor types like Oral Squamous Cell Carcinoma, Malignant Melanoma, and Fibrosarcoma, local...

Active - Recruiting

Looking at a new treatment and assessing the outcome through blood and urine in dogs with prostate cancer

Collection of blood and urine samples for research purposes may allow us to better understand the causes of cancer in pets and may lead to improvements in the detection, diagnosis, and treatment of canine tumors. Additionally, evaluation of blood and urine can help us t...

Active - Recruiting

Surgical technique to place urethral stents in dogs with prostate, bladder and/or urethra tumors

Cancer resulting in obstruction of the lower urinary tract of dogs is most commonly found in the prostate, urinary bladder and urethra (tube responsible for draining urine out of the body). Unfortunately, cancer of the lower urinary tract often results in complete blockage of the...

CLINICAL STUDIES

Better outcomes for our patients are what drive us. To understand which treatments are most effective, we conduct a range of clinical studies. These include **retrospective studies**, where we analyze how patients have responded to established treatments, as well as **prospective studies**, in which we test new diagnostics, drugs, or procedures in real time

Examples of Published Clinical Studies


Preclinical evaluation and first-in-dog clinical trials of PBMC-expanded natural killer cells for adoptive immunotherapy in dogs with cancer

Preclinical evaluation and first-in-dog clinical trials of PBMC-expanded natural killer cells for adoptive immunotherapy in dogs with cancer
Journal for ImmunoTherapy of Cancer (April 2024)
Razmara AM, Farley LE, Harris RM, Judge SJ, Lammers M, Iranpur KR, Johnson EG, Dunai C, Murphy WJ, Brown CT, Rebhun RB, Kent MS, Canter RJ


Changes in diet and supplement use in dogs with cancer

Changes in diet and supplement use in dogs with cancer
Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine (August 2023)
Kramer ML, Larsen JA, Kent MS


T Cell Immune Profiles of Blood and Tumor in Dogs Diagnosed With Malignant Melanoma

T Cell immune profiles of blood and tumor in dogs diagnosed with malignant melanoma
Frontiers in Veterinary Science (December 2021)
Sparger EE, Hong C, Ning C, Rebhun RB, Withers SS, Kieu H, Canter RJ, Monjazeb AM, Kent MS


Pre-clinical and clinical evaluation of the HYPERSCINT plastic scintillation dosimetry research platform for in vivo dosimetry during radiotherapy

Pre-clinical and clinical evaluation of the HYPERSCINT plastic scintillation dosimetry research platform for in vivo dosimetry during radiotherapy
Journal of Applied Clinical Medical Physics (February 2022)
Schoepper I, Dieterich S, Trestrail EA, Kent MS

CLINICAL STUDIES


Fractionated oral dosing and its effect on cyclophosphamide pharmacokinetics in dogs with high-grade multicentric lymphoma

Fractionated oral dosing and its effect on cyclophosphamide pharmacokinetics in dogs with high-grade multicentric lymphoma
Veterinary and Comparative Oncology (August 2022)
Veluvolu S, Willcox JL, Skorupski KA, Al-Nadaf S, Rebhun R, Wittenburg L


Conventionally fractionated radiation therapy is associated with long-term survival in dogs with infiltrative lipomas

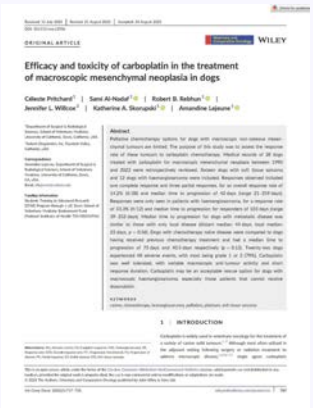
Conventionally fractionated radiation therapy is associated with long-term survival in dogs with infiltrative lipomas
Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association (July 2023)
Feng Y, Kent MS, Théon AP, Hansen KS


The effects of local irradiation on circulating lymphocytes in dogs receiving fractionated radiotherapy

The effects of local irradiation on circulating lymphocytes in dogs receiving fractionated radiotherapy
Veterinary and Comparative Oncology (August 2019)
Kent MS, Emami S, Rebhun R, Theon A, Hansen K, Sparger E


Preclinical evaluation and first-in-dog clinical trials of PBMC-expanded natural killer cells for adoptive immunotherapy in dogs with cancer

Preclinical evaluation and first-in-dog clinical trials of PBMC-expanded natural killer cells for adoptive immunotherapy in dogs with cancer
Journal of ImmunoTherpay of Cancer (August 2022)
Razmara AM, Farley LE, Harris RM, Judge SJ, Lammers M, Iranpur KR, Johnson EG Dunai C, Murphy CJ Brown CT, Rebhun RB, Kent MS, Canter RJ


Efficacy and toxicity of carboplatin in the treatment of macroscopic mesenchymal neoplasia in dogs

Efficacy and toxicity of carboplatin in the treatment of macroscopic mesenchymal neoplasia in dogs
Veterinary and Comparative Oncology (August 2023)
Pritchard C, Al-Nadaf S, Rebhun RB, Willcox JL, Skorupski KA, Lejeune A

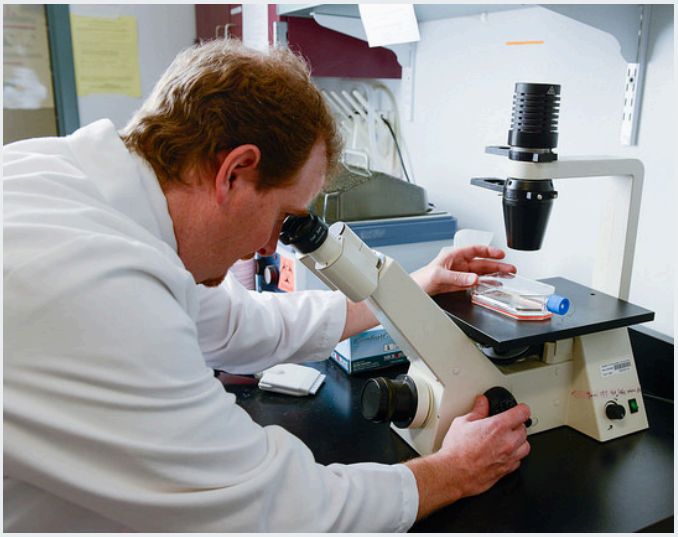

Inhaled recombinant human IL-15 in dogs with naturally occurring pulmonary metastases from osteosarcoma or melanoma: a phase 1 study of clinical activity and correlates of response

Inhaled recombinant human IL-15 in dogs with naturally occurring pulmonary metastases from osteosarcoma or melanoma: a phase 1 study of clinical activity and correlates of response
Journal of ImmunoTherpay of Cancer (June 2022)
Rebhun RB, York D, Cruz SM, Judge SJ, Razmara AM, Farley LE, Brady RV, Johnson EG, Burton JH, Willcox J, Wittenburg LA, Woolard K, Dunai C, Stewart SL, Sparger EE, Withers SS, Ginrich, AA, Skorupsli KA, Al-Nadaf S, Lejeune AT, Culp WT, Murphy WJ, Kent MS, Canter RJ

Our commitment to improving cancer care is reflected in our numerous published clinical studies. These studies, ranging from evaluating established treatments to exploring innovative therapies, contribute to the broader understanding of veterinary oncology and help shape future advancements. The samples above are just a few key areas of our work that contribute to the broader understanding of veterinary oncology and help shape future advancements.

BASIC SCIENCE STUDIES

Understanding the mechanisms behind cancer development and evolution is crucial for identifying effective treatment targets. These pathways are often conserved across species, meaning discoveries made in one species—such as a cat—can potentially benefit other animals, like dogs, and even humans. By unraveling these fundamental processes, we can advance treatment strategies that have a broader impact.



Examples of Published Basic Science Studies

Isoform-specific disruption of the TP73 gene reveals a critical role for TAp73γ in tumorigenesis via leptin
eLife
(August 2023)
Kong X , Yan W, Sun W, Zhang Y, Yang HJ, Chen M, Chen H, de Vere White RW, Zhang J, Chen X

Novel clonality assays for T cell lymphoma in cats targeting the T cell receptor beta, T cell receptor delta, and T cell receptor gamma loci
Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine
(November 2021)
Radtanakatikanon A, Moore PF, Keller SM, Vernau W

TP73 Isoform-specific disruption reveals a critical role of TAp73beta in growth suppression and inflammatory response
CDDpress
(January 2023)
Zhang J, Sun W, Yan W, Kong X, Shen T, Laubach K, Chen M, Chen X

Glioma-associated microglia / macrophages augment tumorigenicity in canine astrocytoma, a naturally occurring model of human glioma
Neuro-Oncology Advances
(May 2021)
Toedebusch R, Grodzki AC, Dickinson PJ, Woolard K, Vinson N, Sturges B, Snyder J, Li CF, Nagasaka O, Consales B, Vernau K, Knipe M, Murthy V, Lein PJ, Toedebusch CM

Our basic science research provides foundational insights into cancer mechanisms and treatment targets. These studies uncover key pathways and processes that can lead to breakthroughs in cancer therapy. The samples above are a few key examples of our published basic science studies, highlighting our contributions to understanding and combating cancer across species.

LONGEVITY & CANCER

At UC Davis, our research has revealed that up to 65% of Golden Retrievers will die from cancer. For years, there has been curiosity about why Golden Retrievers have such a high cancer rate. Despite numerous efforts, researchers were unable to pinpoint a specific gene responsible for this susceptibility. Dr. Rebhun proposed a different approach: instead of searching for genes linked to a high cancer rate, why not investigate genes associated with longevity?

In a groundbreaking study involving over 300 Golden Retrievers, researchers compared the DNA from blood samples of dogs that lived to 14 years or older with those that died before age 12. We discovered that variants of the HER4 gene, known for its role in human cancer, were also associated with an increased lifespan of nearly two years. While most Golden Retrievers have a genetic predisposition to cancer, the finding that some dogs live to 14, 15, or 16 years suggests that HER4 might help mitigate the effects of these predispositions.

HER4, also known as ERBB4, belongs to the family of human epidermal growth factor receptors, the same gene family as HER2, which is notorious for driving rapid cancer cell growth. Dr. Rebhun noted that dogs experience many of the same cancers as humans, making this discovery potentially significant for human medicine as well. "If we find that this variant in HER4 is important in either the formation or progression of cancer in Golden Retrievers, or if it can modify cancer risk in this population, it could have valuable implications for future human cancer studies," he said.

A variant in the 5'UTR of ERBB4 is associated with lifespan in Golden Retrievers
Geroscience
(October 2023)
Rebhun RB, York D, De Graaf FMD, Yoon P, Batcher KL, Luker ME, Ryan S, Peyton J, Kent MS, Stern JA, Bannasch DL

Next Steps

The Center has recently funded a follow-up study to verify these promising results. The Morris Animal Foundation has provided us with genetic samples from all the dogs in the lifetime Golden Retriever study. If these results are confirmed, it will be a crucial step in validating our findings and advancing towards the development of a genetic test.

EPIDEMIOLOGIC STUDIES

By utilizing our extensive medical record system, which holds decades of patient data, we investigate how cancer develops in companion animals. This powerful resource allows us to analyze cancer development, identify risk factors, and observe changes in cancer presentation over time.

We have leveraged this data to examine breed-specific cancer causes and explore controversial topics, such as the impact of spaying and neutering on cancer risk. Below are examples of our published studies that illustrate these findings:

Examples of Published Epidemiologic Studies


Veterinary and Comparative Oncology
Original Article
Evaluation of optimal water fluoridation on the incidence and skeletal distribution of naturally arising osteosarcoma in pet dogs

Evaluation of optimal water fluoridation on the incidence and skeletal distribution of naturally arising osteosarcoma in pet dogs
Veterinary and Comparative Oncology
(June 2017)
Rebhun RB, Kass PH, Kent MS, Watson KD, Withers SS, Culp WTN, King AM


A variant in the 5′UTR of *ERBB4* is associated with lifespan in Golden Retrievers

Association of cancer-related mortality, age and gonadectomy in golden retriever dogs at a veterinary academic center (1989-2016)
PLOS ONE
(February 2018)
Kent MS, Burton JH, Dank G, Bannasch DL, Rebhun RB


PLOS ONE
Longevity and mortality in cats: A single institution necropsy study of 3108 cases (1989-2019)

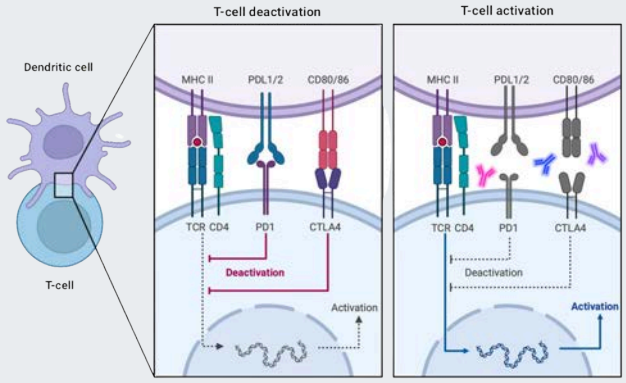
Longevity and mortality in cats: A single institution necropsy study of 3108 cases (1989-2019)
PLOS ONE
(December 2022)
Kent MS, Karchemskiy S, Culp WTN, Lejeune AT, Pesavento PA, Toedebusch C, Brady R, Rebhun R


Application of Bayesian Regression for the Identification of a Catchment Area for Cancer Cases in Dogs and Cats

Application of Bayesian regression for the identification of a catchment area for cancer cases in dogs and cats
Frontiers in Veterinary Science
(July 2022)
Díaz Cao JM, Kent MS, Rupasinghe R, Martínez-López B

MONOCLONAL ANTIBODIES

Using the Immune System to Fight Cancer



We have discovered that tumors are not only immunosuppressive but also evolve to evade the body's immune system. This means that cancer can effectively hide from immune detection. However, what if we could turn the tables and train the body to target cancer directly? This innovative approach, known as immunotherapy, is revolutionizing cancer treatment in humans, and we are bringing these advancements to veterinary medicine.

Our oncology team has collaborated with immunologists to develop monoclonal antibodies designed to overcome this challenge. By identifying specific targets on tumors and those that inhibit the body's immune cells, we are creating antibodies that can address these issues. Since we cannot use human antibodies directly—due to the dog's immune system recognizing them as foreign—we need to "caninize" them, meaning we modify the antibody's structure to match that of a dog's antibodies.

The first monoclonal antibody we have developed targets PD-L1, a receptor that suppresses the activation of T-cells, preventing them from attacking tumors. We began by creating and testing multiple variations of the antibody to ensure binding efficacy. Next, we assessed its ability to block signaling and activate T-cells. After successfully caninizing the antibody, we scaled up production and contracted a company to produce 20 grams—sufficient to initiate clinical trials in the coming months.

Our initial trials will focus on dogs with metastatic cancer for which current treatments are ineffective, starting with advanced melanoma. This therapy holds promise for treating various tumors that metastasize. Additionally, we are excited to share that we have developed two more monoclonal antibodies targeting different mechanisms used by cancer to evade the immune system. We look forward to updating you on our progress as we continue to advance these treatments.


PLOS ONE

Development of canine PD-1/PD-L1 specific monoclonal antibodies and amplification of canine T cell function

Development of canine PD-1/PD-L1 specific monoclonal antibodies and amplification of canine T cell function
PLOS ONE
(July 2020)
Choi JW, Withers SS, Chang H, Spanier JA, De La Trinidad VL, Panesar H, Fife BT, Sciammas R, Sparger EE, Moore PF, Kent MS, Rebhun RB, McSorley SJ

HUMAN CANCER

NCI
Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center

How We Impact Human Cancer

Cancer is a **"One Health"** issue, meaning that advances in veterinary cancer research can significantly impact human health, and vice versa. What we learn from studying cancer in dogs, cats, horses, and other species can lead to breakthroughs that benefit human medicine. Historically, much of our understanding of cancer has come from research on human tumors and models, and many treatments for animals are based on human protocols. We know that effective cancer therapies often translate across species.

Studying cancer in dogs and cats offers unique advantages. For instance, dogs have immune systems that more closely resemble those of humans compared to commonly used rodent models. They live in our homes, experience similar environmental factors, receive comparable levels of healthcare, and develop tumors spontaneously over time. These factors make them invaluable for understanding cancer and driving innovation in treatment.

Recently, the cancer research community has increasingly recognized the potential of using veterinary patients to advance cancer research and improve care. However, this collaboration also presents challenges. To maximize impact, it is crucial to work closely with human cancer specialists to identify the most relevant similarities and differences between cancers in humans and animals. By understanding these nuances, we can leverage cross-species insights to enhance cancer treatment and outcomes for all.

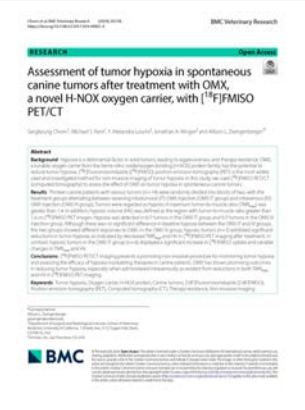
NEXT GENERATION PET SCANNER

One compelling example of how veterinary oncology can impact human medicine is the development of the next-generation PET scanner. Our prototype of this innovative device has already demonstrated its capabilities, allowing for whole-body scans in a single pass. This advancement provides more detailed and faster imaging while using significantly lower doses of radiation, thereby improving image quality and patient safety.

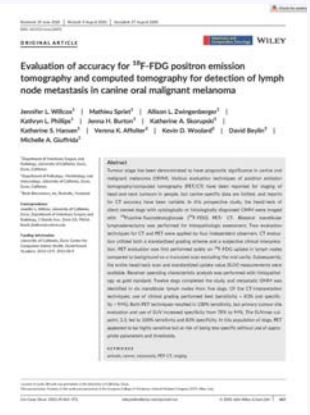
The first units of these next-generation PET scanners are now built and approved for use, marking their entry into human medicine as well. This technology not only enhances diagnostic precision but also exemplifies the valuable cross-disciplinary innovations emerging from veterinary research.

Examples of Published Pet Scanner Studies

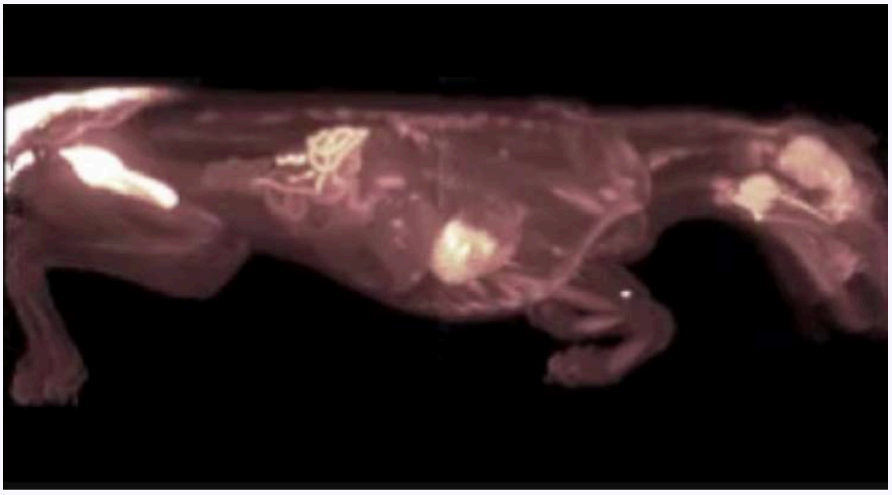
Our next-generation PET scanner has been instrumental in advancing both veterinary and human medicine. The following published studies highlight how this cutting-edge technology is improving diagnostic accuracy, treatment planning, and patient outcomes:



Assessment of tumor hypoxia in spontaneous canine tumors after treatment with OMX, a novel H-NOX oxygen carrier, with [18F]FMISO PET/CT
GBMC Veterinary Research (May 2024)
Choen S, Kent MS, Loucks FA, Winger JA, Zwingenberger AL

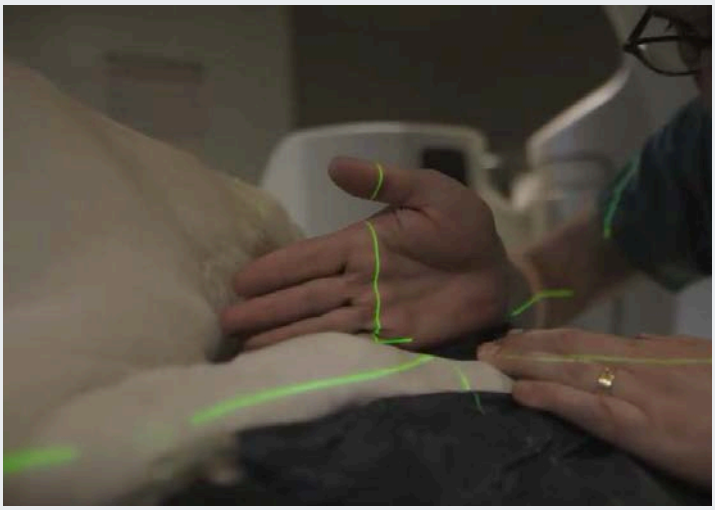


Evaluation of accuracy for 18F-FDG positron emission tomography and computed tomography for detection of lymph node metastasis in canine oral malignant melanoma
Veterinary and Comparative Oncology (August 2020)
Willcox JL, Spriet M, Zwingenberger AL, Phillips KL, Burton JH, Skorupski KA, Hansen KS, Affolter VK, Woolard KD, Beylin D, Giuffrida MA



THE FUTURE

We are committed to advancing our research and care in every aspect. Our focus will remain on investigating the causes and prevention of cancer, as well as understanding the mechanisms behind tumor development, growth, and immune system suppression. By continuously expanding our knowledge, we aim to translate these discoveries into innovative diagnostics and treatments.



Our goal is to push the boundaries of cancer care and to apply what we learn to improve outcomes for both animals and humans. Through relentless research and translation of our findings into practical applications, we strive to lead the way in advancing cancer treatment and enhancing patien

What is on the Horizon

Our primary focus remains on creating new immunotherapies and developing effective treatments for advanced metastasis. We believe that these areas represent the greatest opportunity to make a significant impact on our patients' lives.

By advancing our understanding of the immune system’s role in combating cancer and innovating therapies that target metastatic disease, we aim to improve outcomes and enhance the quality of life for both animals and humans.

Through ongoing research and collaboration, we are excited about the potential breakthroughs that lie ahead, and we are dedicated to bringing these advancements to fruition for our patients.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

We rely on grants and foundation support to fund our research, but the majority of our resources come from the generosity of individual donors. Your contributions play a crucial role in enabling us to continue our vital work in cancer research and treatment.

By supporting our initiatives, you help us advance groundbreaking therapies, enhance patient care, and make a lasting impact on the lives of animals and humans alike. Every donation, no matter the size, brings us one step closer to our goal of improving cancer outcomes for all.

Research

Funding for animal cancer research is critically limited, and your support can make a significant difference. You have the opportunity to help us fund essential clinical trials or develop new therapies that can transform cancer treatment for our patients.

- **Resident Studies: Start at $7,500**
- **Pilot Faculty Awards: Begin at $17,500**
- **Full-Trial Support: Starts at $100,000**

People

People are the backbone of our mission, and the greatest impact we can make comes from bringing new faculty and researchers into our team. By expanding our group, we enhance our capacity for innovation and improve cancer care.

We offer multiple opportunities for support, from funding professorships to establishing faculty chairs:

- **Endow the CCAH Directorship: $10M**

Equipment

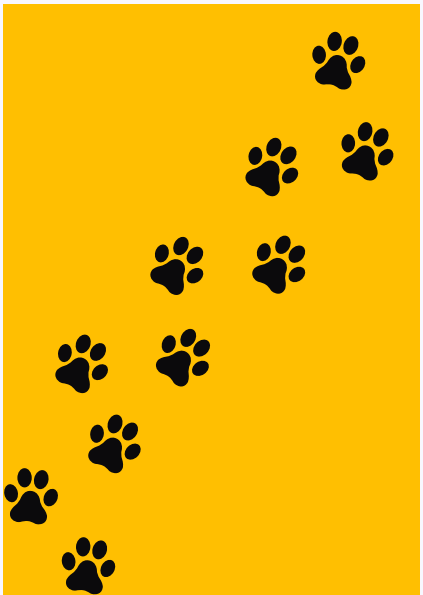
You can make a significant impact by funding essential clinical and research equipment. Since equipment costs are often not covered by grants, your support is crucial in addressing this pressing need.

- **Equipment Grants: Starting at $12,500**
- **New Linear Accelerator: $3,000,000**
- **Various Options Available: We have many funding opportunities between these amounts.**

Training

We are dedicated to training the next generation of veterinary oncologists through both research and clinical practice. Our programs not only cultivate skilled professionals but also foster a collaborative environment where clinical residents engage in meaningful research.
You can support our mission by contributing to our training initiatives:

- **Postdoctoral Fellow: $170,000**
- **Endow a Permanent Residency Position: $1,750,000**



We Cannot Do It Without You!

If you are interested in supporting our efforts please feel free to contact Sasha Wirth, Executive Director of Development, Veterinary Medical Complex
sswirth@ucdavis.edu or 530-383-1273

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THANK YOU