



NIDCR Provides Major Impetus to Salivary Gland Tumor Research

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The National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (**NIDCR**) has a long history of promoting salivary gland research as part of its Congressionally-mandated mission to improve oral health. In recent years, NIDCR has moved forcefully to address salivary gland tumors (SGT), allocating over \$12 million to research projects focused on the causes and treatment of cancers found in the salivary glands. In October alone, NIDCR announced the commitment of \$6.8 million to such projects. Indeed, NIDCR has become an indispensable partner in carrying out ACCRF's Research Agenda.

Over the past 3 years, NIDCR has contributed in many ways to the development of a community of researchers focused on salivary gland tumors:

- **Scientific Workshops** – NIDCR has been instrumental in organizing meetings of the world's leading researchers to identify the crucial unaddressed questions about salivary gland cancer as well as the resources required to move the field forward. With the assistance of ACCRF and the NIH's Office of Rare Disease Research (ORDR), workshops were held in October 2006 and November 2008 that discussed the "state of the science" and led to concrete scientific collaborations. A summary of the latest workshop's proceedings is available [here](#).
- **SGT Biorepository** – Through a contract awarded to M.D. Anderson, NIDCR organized and funded a consortium of academic medical centers with expertise in head and neck cancers to bank tumor specimens for research. Centralized at M.D. Anderson, the SGT Biorepository also includes the University of Virginia, Johns Hopkins University, the University of Pittsburgh, the University of California San Francisco and Brown University. ACCRF Executive Director Jeffrey Kaufman serves on the Tissue Utilization Committee that will make available the tumor specimens to researchers globally. More information on the \$5.5 million SGT Biorepository is available [here](#).
- **SGT Xenograft Bank** – In October, NIDCR announced \$1.6 million of funding through the Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to develop and molecularly characterize SGT xenografts (mice implanted with human tumors). With ACCRF's support, the University of Virginia has been successful in creating many ACC xenograft models; now that leading effort will be expanded to include all salivary gland tumors. Vanderbilt University also will develop and profile SGT xenograft models. More information on NIDCR's grants is available [here](#) and [here](#).
- **Rare Diseases Clinical Research Network (RDCRN)** – Also in October, NIDCR announced the funding of a \$5.2 million grant through a cooperative agreement to study the molecular and epidemiologic



characteristics of salivary gland cancers. Managed at M.D. Anderson, the RDCRN's SGT consortium will also include researchers from Johns Hopkins University, the University of Pittsburgh and the University of California San Francisco. Projects will focus on the three most common subtypes: ACC, mucoepidermoid carcinoma and adenocarcinoma. ACCRF Executive Director Jeffrey Kaufman is the Patient Advocate on the grant and serves on the External Advisory Board. The SGT consortium is one of 19 RDCRN consortia representing 95 rare diseases; given that there are nearly 7,000 known rare diseases, ACC patients are fortunate to benefit from this expanding effort. More information on the RDCRN is available [here](#) and a description of all the new consortia (including SGT) is available [here](#).

These substantial and impactful commitments from NIDCR are turning the field of salivary gland tumor research into a dynamic and promising area for scientists. A community of researchers is energized and expectant of new discoveries. And their network is expanding to include clinical researchers who will translate the basic science into therapies for patients. The National Cancer Institute (NCI) has formed a [Head and Neck Steering Committee](#) of medical oncologists to review and approve clinical trials (ACCRF Director Marnie Kaufman is a member). The Committee's Rare Tumors Task Force has identified salivary gland tumors as a priority area – yet another sign of building momentum. Clearly, the ACC patient community owes an enormous debt of gratitude to NIDCR.

Note: The National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR) is the federal government's lead agency for scientific research on oral, dental and craniofacial health and disease. NIDCR is one of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.