

IN BRIEF

PANCREATIC ADENOCARCINOMA

A lethally irradiated allogeneic granulocyte–macrophage colony stimulating factor-secreting tumor vaccine for pancreatic adenocarcinoma: a phase II trial of safety, efficacy, and immune activation

Lutz, E. *et al. Ann. Surg.* 253, 328–335 (2011)

An immunotherapy approach (consisting of cells secreting granulocyte–macrophage colony stimulating factor) in combination with chemoradiation seems to be safe and effective in patients with resected pancreatic adenocarcinoma. Lutz *et al.* enrolled 60 patients in their single-center, phase II study, and suggest that their findings provide the rationale for a multicenter study.

PROBIOTICS

Recombinant lactobacilli expressing linoleic acid isomerase can modulate the fatty acid composition of host adipose tissue in mice.

Rosberg-Cody, E. *et al. Microbiology* doi:10.1099/mic.0.043406-0

Researchers have demonstrated that a single gene expressed in a probiotic can influence the fatty acid composition of host fat. Mice fed with a recombinant *Lactobacillus* expressing a certain type of conjugated linoleic acid had increased levels of this fatty acid in their livers and adipose tissue compared with controls. Influencing fatty acid composition could have therapeutic relevance for cancer and nonalcoholic fatty liver disease.

REFLUX ESOPHAGITIS

Weakly acidic refluxes have a major role in the pathogenesis of proton pump inhibitor-resistant reflux oesophagitis

Frazzoni, M. *et al. Aliment. Pharmacol. Ther.* 33, 601–606 (2011)

Frazzoni and colleagues performed impedance–pH monitoring in 20 patients who had heartburn despite PPI therapy. Weakly acidic refluxes were found to be above the normal range in all cases, which lead the researchers to conclude that these refluxes have an important role in the pathogenesis of PPI-resistant reflux esophagitis. Activated pepsins might be responsible for mucosal damage, as they are able to maintain their proteolytic activity in weakly acidic environments.

ALCOHOLIC HEPATITIS

In-vitro steroid resistance correlates with outcome in severe alcoholic hepatitis

di Mambro, A. J. *et al. Hepatology* doi:10.1002/hep.24159

Up to 40% of patients with alcoholic hepatitis fail to respond to steroid treatment. Researchers have found that interleukin 2 receptor blockade is able to improve *in vitro* steroid sensitivity and could represent a mechanism to overcome steroid resistance in these patients.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS