

Two UC San Diego Researchers Awarded \$780,000 in Grants from Susan G. Komen for The Cure

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Researchers at the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine received nearly \$780,000 from the Susan G. Komen for the Cure® for two studies regarding estrogen levels and the behavior of breast cancer tumors.

John P. Pierce, PhD, Sam M. Walton Professor of Cancer Research in the Department of Family and Preventive Medicine at UCSD School of Medicine and director of the Population Sciences Division in the Moores UCSD Cancer Center, will study whether secondary breast cancer events in postmenopausal breast cancer survivors in the Women's Healthy Eating and Living Study (WHEL) were mediated by high estrogen levels. Pierce received a grant of almost \$600,000 for this study.

"With this grant, we can continue the research on breast cancer that we initiated in 1993. During the study we collected over 30,000 blood samples from study participants and are now looking for early markers indicating which women will experience a recurrence," said Pierce. "This study is focused on circulating estrogen concentrations, as there is good evidence that women with higher concentrations may be at higher risk. Once we are able to determine those who are at higher risk, we can plan intervention studies to reduce the risk."

Dafne (Maria) Cardamone, PhD, researcher in the laboratory of Michael G. Rosenfeld, Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator and Professor of Medicine at the UC San Diego School of Medicine, received a postdoctoral award for \$180,000 to develop a strategy for identification of putative tumor translocations in breast cancer.

"It is wonderful that Komen for the Cure is so forward-thinking with its allocation of grant funds for high-risk/high-gain research," said Rosenfeld. "In receiving funding for this study, Dafne and I hope to develop a strategy using deep sequencing technology to detect fusion transcripts, in order to determine if breast cancer tumors also exhibit translocations like those which occur in leukemia." He added that this area of study was launched by a pilot program implemented with Barbara Parker, MD, at the Moores UCSD Cancer Center, which led UCSD researchers to consider alternative approaches for this possibility.

These two grants equaling \$780,000 are part of the \$3.2 million in research funding that Komen for the Cure is investing in California medical institutions this year alone as part of a \$59 million portfolio of 2010 research grants worldwide.

“Komen’s infusion of millions of dollars into research projects means that promising research that is designed to treat and ultimately eradicate breast cancer will continue,” said Eric Winer, MD, Komen’s chief scientific advisor.

The UCSD Moores Cancer Center is one of the nation’s 40 National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Centers, combining research, clinical care and community outreach to advance the prevention, treatment and cure of cancer. For more information, visit [UCSD Moores Cancer Center](#) 

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