

Searching out pancreatic cancer risk

8 December 2017, by Paul Govern

A prospective study by Wei Zheng, Ph.D., M.D., and colleagues delivers the first direct epidemiological evidence that increased production of a chemical compound called prostaglandin E2 (PGE2), as measured by metabolites in urine (PGE-M), is associated with increased pancreatic cancer risk.

The study appears in the *International Journal of Cancer*.

From among more than 120,000 research subjects who provided [urine samples](#) before cancer diagnosis, Zheng's team selected 239 who later developed [pancreatic cancer](#), matching them with 483 cancer-free subjects.

Among the results: with other risk factors held equal, compared to those with the lowest PGE-M levels (the first quartile), individuals with the highest levels (the fourth quartile) had nearly twice the odds of developing pancreatic cancer.

"Our findings [...] suggest that urinary PGE-M may serve as a promising cancer biomarker to predict pancreatic cancer risk," the authors wrote.

Zheng's team had previously shown that PGE2 is associated with greater risk for colorectal cancer, gastric cancer and breast cancer.

More information: Yong Cui et al. Prospective study of urinary prostaglandin E2 metabolite and pancreatic cancer risk, *International Journal of Cancer* (2017). [DOI: 10.1002/ijc.31007](https://doi.org/10.1002/ijc.31007)

Provided by Vanderbilt University

APA citation: Searching out pancreatic cancer risk (2017, December 8) retrieved 13 October 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-12-pancreatic-cancer.html>

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