

MEDIA RELEASE

New funding to understand and prevent the spread of breast cancer

Centenary Institute cancer researcher, Dr Shweta Tikoo, has been awarded new funding from Cancer Australia to investigate the underlying mechanisms that drive the spread of breast cancer. It is hoped that this research will identify new therapeutic targets aimed at preventing the spread of breast cancer to other parts of the body.

Breast cancer continues to be one of the major causes of death in Australian women. It is estimated that this year alone over 3,000 Australian women succumbed to breast cancer.

While primary breast cancer can be treated through surgery and chemotherapy, prognosis is much poorer once the cancer metastasises (spreads) to other organs. This is due in part to the rapid development of chemotherapy resistance in metastatic breast cancer cells.

Dr Tikoo said this new research project will investigate the role of “Perivascular Macrophages” in tumour cell metastasis. Macrophages are a type of immune cells which have been widely implicated in tumour progression and metastasis.

“If we can understand the spread of breast cancer at cellular and molecular level, we can develop new therapeutic targets to intervene in the process,” Dr Tikoo said.

“This funding support from Cancer Australia will enable us to take a new and inventive approach to understanding and treating breast cancer, which will hopefully improve the patient outcome in future.”

This funding was awarded from Cancer Australia’s *Priority-driven Collaborative Cancer Research Scheme*, which aims to support research that reduces the impact of cancer on the community.

Dr Tikoo is a member of the Centenary Institute’s Immune Imaging program. To find out more about the program visit http://www.centenary.org.au/cen_program/immune-imaging/