

Advertisement

<a href="#">NEWS</a>	<a href="#">OBITUARIES</a>	<a href="#">SPORTS</a>	<a href="#">BUSINESS</a>	<a href="#">ENTERTAINMENT</a>	<a href="#">VELOCITY</a>	<a href="#">FEATURES</a>	<a href="#">OPINION</a>	<a href="#">INTERACTIVES</a>	<a href="#">SERVICES</a>
----------------------	----------------------------	------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------	------------------------------	--------------------------

Search Kentuckiana:  All

**Subscribe Now**

[courier-journal.com > Local News >](#)

Friday, November 10, 2006

[E-mail this](#) | [Print page](#)

[View 7 days >](#) [Su](#) [M](#) [Tu](#) [W](#) [Th](#) [F](#) [Sa](#) [Adv. search >](#)

**\$5,000 cash back**  
from closing  
Advertisement

## UofL cancer researcher sees 'miracles'

Treatment tackles advanced melanoma

By **Deborah Yetter**  
[dyetter@courier-journal.com](mailto:dyetter@courier-journal.com)  
The Courier-Journal

Advanced melanoma -- a deadly form of skin cancer -- is almost always a death sentence for patients.

But researchers at the University of Louisville report dramatic progress with an experimental treatment that already is prolonging life for a handful of cancer patients.

Advertisement



[+ enlarge](#)

Dr. Jason Chesney presented the findings of his research team yesterday at an international cancer conference in Prague. (By Kylene Lloyd, The Courier-Journal)

### NEWSLETTERS

**Sign up now!**

Get morning headlines, breaking news, afternoon business updates, weekend happenings and more sent to your inbox!



### FEEDBACK

**STORYCHAT**

[Click here](#) to join a discussion in our reader forums.

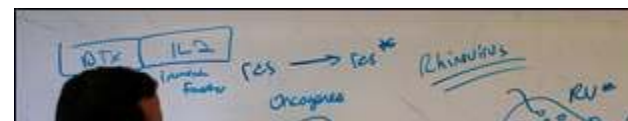
### E-EDITION

"We literally are seeing miracles in the clinical trials," said Dr. Jason Chesney, who presented the findings of his research team yesterday at an international cancer conference in Prague, Czech Republic.

The treatment of seven patients in the clinical trials began last year, and 12 months later all of them are still alive --

### CANCER STUDY

- For more information about the U of L melanoma study, call (502) 217-5398.





Check out the new **digital version** of The C-J

RSS

RSS feeds - [XML](#)

Get the headlines you want delivered to your reader.



Advertisement

**THE CRAFTSMAN COLLECTION**

SPLIT QUARTER-SAWN OAK AND WILD BLACK CHERRY

**Stickley**  
18TH CENTURY TO MISSION TO MODERN

helps it identify and attack the cancer.

## Teaching immune system

The initial results are exciting, Chesney said, because they suggest the body can be prompted to fight melanoma and other cancers.

"The immune system can be taught to kill cancer cells," he said.

Chesney was one of two U of L researchers invited to present papers at this week's meeting of the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer. A U of L researcher seeking a cancer vaccine presented findings of a separate study Wednesday at the international conference.

Chesney's work represents a new approach in cancer research aimed at defeating the disease by creating an internal immune response to it, rather than trying to kill it with conventional, more toxic treatments of chemotherapy or radiation, said Dr. Len Lichtenfeld, deputy chief medical officer of the American Cancer Society.

Lichtenfeld said he finds Chesney's work encouraging and will be interested in the results as the study expands to more patients. The fact that the experimental drug appears to trigger an immune response to melanoma is especially interesting, he said.

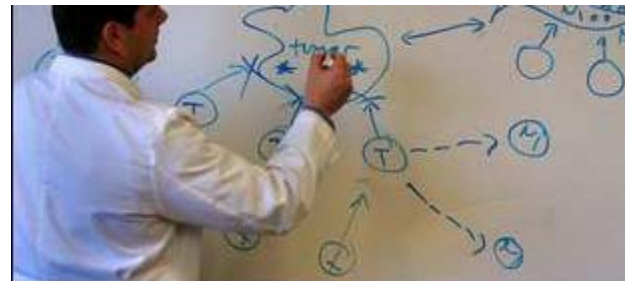
"Melanoma is a disease that fails to elicit an immune response," Lichtenfeld said.

Melanoma, associated with excessive exposure to the sun and a family history of the disease, is an especially deadly form of cancer and doesn't respond well to conventional treatments once it spreads.

although the average life expectancy for advanced melanoma is about eight months, Chesney, 37, said in an interview Friday before he left for the conference.

The trials at U of L's James Graham Brown Cancer Center are being expanded to 50 melanoma patients.

The goal is to prompt the body to fight the disease with a drug that boosts its immune response and



[+ enlarge](#)

The initial results are exciting, Dr. Jason Chesney said, because they suggest the body can be prompted to fight melanoma and other cancers. "These tumor cells are pretty sneaky," he said. (By Kylene Lloyd, The Courier-Journal)

## RELATED NEWS FROM THE WEB

Latest headlines by topic:

- [Prague, Czech Republic](#)
- [Czech Republic](#)
- [Charitable Organizations](#)
- [Stredocesky, Czech Republic](#)
- [World News](#)

Powered by [Topix.net](#)

Though curable if caught immediately and removed, it can spread and cause tumors throughout the body that are much more difficult to treat.

## Women at risk

About 8,000 people are expected to die from melanoma this year, according to the American Cancer Society. Although it accounts for only about 4 percent of skin cancers, it causes most of the deaths, the society reports on its Web site.

It's the No. 1 cancer killer in women ages 25 to 30, Chesney said. Though most cancers attack older people, "melanoma routinely kills people in their 30s," he said.

Chesney said he hopes to use his research to attack other cancers eventually, but for now is concentrating on melanoma.

He said the body's immune system has "blockers" he described as "off switches" that keep it from attacking healthy cells -- but also keep it from attacking some cancers, such as melanoma.

The body's immune system already has a difficult time fighting cancer cells because they are adept at creating defenses, he said.

"These tumor cells are pretty sneaky," he said. "They figure out how to avoid getting killed."

The experimental drug Chesney is using is a combination of a toxin and a drug that frees the immune system to fight cancer. The drug defeats the defenses of the tumor, attaches itself to a cancer cell and injects the toxin into the cell, killing it.

"We're trying to turn off the blocker and turn on the immune system," he said.

Chesney's research showed that five out of the seven patients in the trials experienced significant regression of tumors. One patient experienced complete regression of tumors in the liver, Chesney said, a highly unusual development in a patient with advanced melanoma.

The patients weren't available for comment because of federal rules that require confidentiality for research subjects.

Chesney couldn't say yet how soon the research might result in an approved cancer treatment. But he said he's optimistic it could result in a way to better limit the growth of melanoma and other cancers.

The trend in research is not to eradicate cancer but to make it a disease that can be managed and controlled, Chesney said.

"Our goal is to change cancer from an illness that kills people," he said. "It's




---

**NIGHTCLUB  
MANAGEMENT  
POSITIONS**  
NIGHTCLUB  
MANAGEMENT  
POSITIONS-Kentucky,...

---

**Administrative**  
UBIQUITY BRANDS,  
LLCJoin us for exciting...

---

**ELECTRICAL  
CONTRACTOR**  
ELECTRICAL  
CONTRACTOR Highway  
Department...

---

**SALES \$40,000 AVG.  
INCOME! Our**  
SALES \$40,000 AVG.  
INCOME! Our average s...

---

**DRIVERS MATHESON  
POSTAL SERVIC**  
DRIVERS MATHESON  
POSTAL SERVICES, INC.  
i...

---

**Administrative**  
Family Video Join the  
Largest Privately ...

---

**ADMINISTRATIVE  
PERSONNEL  
ASSISTANCE**  
ADMINISTRATIVE/  
PERSONNEL ASSISTANCE  
nee...

---


**UNIT MANAGER/  
STAFF DEVELOPMEN**  
UNIT MANAGER/ STAFF

---

Advertisement

more about getting control."

Reporter Deborah Yetter can be reached at (502) 582-4228.

**STORYCHAT**  [Post a Comment](#) [View All Comments](#)

---

How encouraging!! The doctors, researchers, and patients participating in this treatment are doing wonderful work for all of us. Thanks!!

Posted: Fri Nov 10, 2006 9:25 am

---

[Post a Comment](#) [View All Comments](#)

DEVELOPMENT We are  
C...

**BOOKKEEPER in  
Centralized Bill**  
BOOKKEEPER in  
Centralized Billing  
Office...

**MEDICAL Immediate  
Openings F**  
MEDICAL Immediate  
Openings \* Front Desk ...

All Top Jobs

## About Top Jobs

^^ [Back to top](#)

 [E-mail this](#)  [Print this](#)  [Subscribe](#)  [XML](#) [RSS feeds](#)

[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Sports](#) | [Business](#) | [Features](#) | [Travel](#) | [Scene](#) | [Velocity](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Cars](#) | [Homes](#) | [Shopping](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Search](#)

**Classified Partners:** [Jobs: CareerBuilder.com](#) | [Cars: Cars.com](#) | [Apartments: Apartments.com](#) | [Shopping: ShopLocal.com](#)

Copyright 2005 The Courier-Journal.

Use of this site signifies your agreement to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#) (updated 6/7/2005).

Send questions and comments to [The Webmaster](#).