

# SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

Contact: Jennifer Donovan  
(214) 648-3404

## UT SOUTHWESTERN NAMED AS STUDY SITE IN NATIONAL PROSTATE CANCER CHEMOPREVENTION TRIAL

DALLAS — October 15, 1993 — Prostate-cancer researchers at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas have been selected to participate in a huge nationwide study to see if a drug now used to treat benign prostate disease might help prevent prostate cancer.

The Prostate Cancer Prevention Trial was announced by the National Cancer Institute in Washington this week. The NCI-funded study is the first chemoprevention trial ever conducted for prostate cancer, the second-leading cause of cancer death in men.

UT Southwestern is one of 222 sites at 80 medical centers for the randomized clinical trial, which will test the effect of finasteride on the development of prostate cancer in 18,000 men age 55 or older. Dr. Arthur Sagalowsky, professor of urology, is principal investigator at UT Southwestern.

Southwest Oncology Group, a national clinical-research group based in San Antonio, is coordinating the trial nationwide. Sagalowsky has been UT Southwestern's principal investigator on more than two dozen Southwest Oncology Group urologic-cancer studies.

Finasteride was approved by the Food and Drug Administration in June 1992 for treatment of benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) — noncancerous enlargement of the prostate. Molecular-level research done at UT Southwestern laid the groundwork for the development of finasteride. Clinical trials of the drug also were conducted there.

"This is a very safe drug with minimal side effects," said Sagalowsky. "Both logic and science indicate that it may be helpful in preventing prostate cancer."

(More)

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SOUTHWESTERN MEDICAL CENTER

Southwestern Medical School • Southwestern Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences • Southwestern Allied Health Sciences School  
Affiliated teaching hospitals and outpatient clinics

Office of News and Public Information • 5323 Harry Hines Blvd., Dallas TX 75235-9060 • Telephone (214) 648-3404 • FAX (214) 648-8252

Through urology clinics at UT Southwestern's James W. Aston Ambulatory Care Center and at Parkland Memorial Hospital and the Dallas Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center — both UT Southwestern-affiliated hospitals — Sagalowsky and his colleagues in the urology division hope to enroll 150 healthy men between the ages of 55 and 70 over the next three years. Half of them, chosen at random, will take a 5-milligram tablet of finasteride daily for seven years. The other half will receive a placebo.

Researchers will track the PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen) levels in blood samples taken from participants twice a year. PSA, a protein produced by prostate cells, is elevated in men with prostate cancer. Because finasteride is known to lower PSA levels, the question has been raised whether taking it could delay detection of prostate cancer.

"Actually what we learn from this trial could help us protect men from having a developing prostate cancer masked by the drug," Sagalowsky said. "In fact, a secondary objective of the trial is to determine what rate of change in PSA should be of concern in patients taking finasteride."

The prostate-cancer specialist said the clinical trial is open to healthy men between the ages of 55 and 70 who don't have and have not had prostate cancer.

"We are particularly interested in enrolling men who are at high risk for prostate cancer," Sagalowsky said. High-risk groups include African Americans, who have the highest rate of prostate cancer in the world, and men with a close relative such as a father, brother or uncle with prostate cancer.

"But we're talking about the most common cancer in men," the urologist added. "No man is at low risk."

For information on enrolling in the Prostate Cancer Prevention Trial, call (214) 648-7272.

###