



World Cancer
Research Fund
Hong Kong

世界癌症研究基金會(香港)

FOR RELEASE

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Breast cancer survivors “ready to make lifestyle changes”

A conference will be told that cancer survivorship is one of the most urgent priorities for cancer research, as evidence suggests breast cancer survivors are prepared to change their diets following diagnosis.

Professor Laurence Kolonel of the University of Hawaii Cancer Center, is expected to tell World Cancer Research Fund Hong Kong’s (WCRF HK) conference today (28 May), *Cancer Prevention: Chinese vs Western Perspectives*, that cancer survivorship is an area where more research is needed.

The number of cancer survivors is increasing as treatments improve but there is still a lack of strong evidence about how people can reduce their risk of cancer recurring.

WCRF HK recommends that after treatment cancer survivors should follow its Recommendations for Cancer Prevention. But because of the lack of strong evidence in this area, the charity has identified it as one of its research priorities and the WCRF global network has also commissioned a review of the evidence for breast cancer survivors as part of its Continuous Update Project.

Another study will be presented at the conference, which is being held at the YMCA of Hong Kong, Tsimshatsui, has found that breast cancer patients regularly change their diets following diagnosis, with one of the reasons for this being to improve their health.

The findings of the study suggest some of these changes can help prevent cancer, such as reducing alcohol consumption and eating more vegetables. But the cancer survivors in the study also reduced intake of poultry and some kinds of fruit, even though there is no evidence that either of these increase cancer risk and the evidence actually suggests that fruit probably reduces cancer risk.

Heidi Lau, General Manager of WCRF HK, said: “This study suggests women who have already had breast cancer may be more prepared to make changes to their lifestyle for health reasons, which can reduce the risk of cancer recurring.

“This is very positive, but it is important that these breast cancer survivors – and people who have finished treatment for all types of cancer - have access to evidence-based recommendations.

“Firstly, we need to do more to get across the message to cancer survivors about what they can do to prevent cancer recurring because at the moment lack of awareness may be leading to them

making changes where there is no evidence it affects cancer risk.

“But while awareness-raising is a key part of this, it is also important that more research is carried out so that cancer survivors have access to the same quality of information as is already available for reducing cancer risk in the first place. This is why we have identified cancer survivorship as one of our key research priorities.

“I am pleased that our conference will be an opportunity to help raise awareness among health professionals about the importance of cancer survivorship, as part of the conference’s wider theme of comparing perspectives of cancer prevention between China and the West.”

Professor Kolonel added: "The significance of diet-related risk factors is being recognized more widely, especially as smoking rates decline in many developed countries and as the world is faced with a global obesity epidemic.

"But unfortunately, a satisfactory body of research on the role of diet in cancer prevention among survivors is lacking, and until we know more current advice for such patients is to follow the same guidelines as for the primary prevention of cancer."

Notes to Editors:

It will be the 8th time that the annual conference has been held. More details of the Conference can be found at www.wcrf-hk.org

- The conference is aimed at Health Care Professionals (doctors, Chinese medicine practitioners, nurses, dietitians, nutritionists, public health specialists); academic and research institute personnel (especially scientific investigators in food, nutrition, physical activity, and Chinese medicine in relation to cancer prevention); and Government members (especially those responsible for making public health policy).

About WCRF HK

World Cancer Research Fund Hong Kong (WCRF HK) raises awareness that cancer is largely preventable and helps people make choices to reduce their chances of developing the disease.

This includes research into how cancer risk is related to diet, physical activity, and weight management, and education programmes that highlight the fact that about a third of cancers could be prevented through changes to lifestyle. For more information on the charity’s work, visit www.wcrf-hk.org

The WCRF/AICR Expert Report, called *Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity, and the Prevention of Cancer: a Global Perspective*, was launched in November 2007 and is the most comprehensive report ever published on the link between cancer and lifestyle. For more information, visit www.dietandcancerreport.org

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