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News Release

CPDR Researchers Win Awards at Prestigious Cancer Meetings

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ROCKVILLE, Md. -- The DoD Center for Prostate Disease Research announces two recent awards received by researchers in their Basic Science Program under the direction of Dr. Shiv Srivastava. These prestigious awards reflect the high level of recognition that the CPDR program has achieved in the scientific community.

Dr. Aijun Liu received the Scholar-in-training Award to attend the 95th Annual meeting of the American Association of Cancer Research which will be held in Orlando, Fla., in March 2004. Dr. Liu is one of only 12 national and international recipients of this award and her abstract was highly rated by the Program Committee of the AACR with awards presented to less than 10 percent of this year's applicants. These awards are co-sponsored by the AACR and Astra Zeneca, a leading pharmaceutical company. The purpose of this award is to support young investigators who will be presenting meritorious abstracts.

Dr. Liu is currently a post-doctoral fellow at CPDR and is working with a team of researchers including Dr. Gyorgy Petrovics, CPDR Senior Staff Scientist, Dr. Vasantha Srikantan, Dr. Syed Shaheduzzamen, Dr. Bungo Furosato, Dr. Isabell Sesterhenn, Dr. Maryanne Vahey, Dr. Idong Chen, Dr. Leon Sun, Dr. Judd Moul and Dr. Shiv Srivastava on the gene chip project which uses patient data to identify prostate-cancer specific genes with the potential to lead to new diagnostic and prognostic markers and therapeutic targets for prostate cancer.

Dr. Vasantha Srikantan is the recipient of the second award which is the Outstanding poster presentation award for the 2003 Society of Urologic Oncology Meeting. The SUO meeting was held Dec. 5-9, 2003, at the Natcher Conference Center on the campus of the National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Md.

Dr. Srikantan's poster is entitled "The Functional Characterization of HEPSIN in Prostate Cancer Cells". Co-contributors to the poster include Michael Valladares, Dr. Syed Shaheduzzamen, Dr. Maryanne Vahey, Dr. Johng Rhim, Dr. Judd W. Moul and Dr. Shiv Srivastava. All authors are CPDR staff, with the exception of Dr. Maryanne Vahey, who is a collaborator and deputy director of Research Operations, Division of Retrovirology at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research.

HEPSIN is a serine protease (protein that can specifically digest other proteins) that has been shown to be overexpressed in primary prostate cancer. The expression of HEPSIN decreases in advanced metastatic cancer or cancer that has already spread, or metastasized, to other parts of the body. Dr. Srikantan has performed successful experiments on *in vivo* or living models to increase expression of HEPSIN. This has great potential for clinical usefulness. For cases of advanced cancer, if the expression of HEPSIN can be increased then cancer cells will die and can help with treatments to patients. Basically, an increase of HEPSIN protects cells.

This research is still in its early stages and Dr. Srikantan continues to further investigate the functions of HEPSIN.

Established by Congress in 1991, the Center for Prostate Disease Research is a comprehensive research program to study prostate cancer and prostate disease in the tri-service military health care system. CPDR is a DoD program affiliated with the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, and many other tri-service military medical centers.

More information is available at the CPDR website, www.cpdr.org.