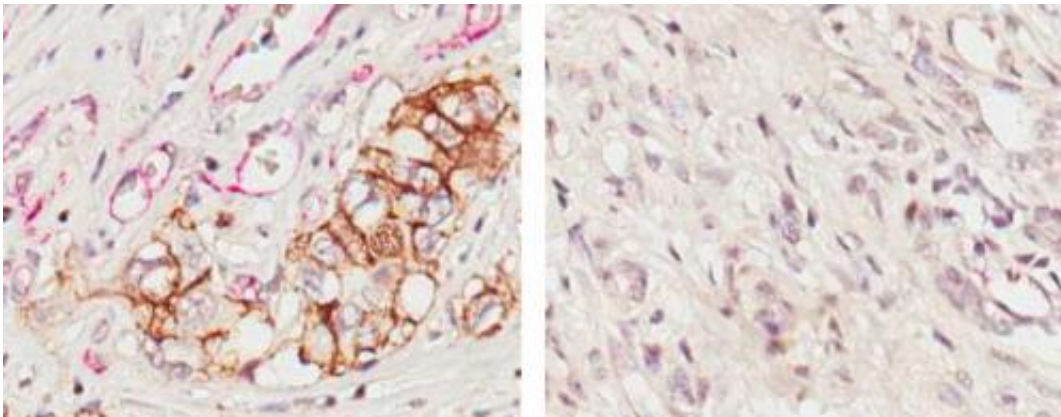


# Promising new strategy to halt pancreatic cancer metastasis

March 2 2015

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High expression levels of IL-17B and its receptor (brown) in pancreatic cancer (left) compared with normal tissue (right). Credit: Wu et al., 2015

Pancreatic cancer and its metastases might have their days numbered, according to a study published in *The Journal of Experimental Medicine*.

Despite substantial progress in treating [pancreatic cancer](#), this disease is still considered largely incurable. The [poor prognosis](#) is mostly due to metastases to other vital organs, a process driven by soluble factors present in the tumor environment.

A secreted immune protein called interleukin(IL)-17 has been associated with cancer progression, and receptors for IL-17 are expressed in the pancreas. Wen-Hwa Lee and colleagues from the Academia Sinica in

Taiwan now show that one type of IL-17 (IL-17B) and its receptor are highly expressed in pancreatic cancer, and their levels correlate with poor patient survival. In mice, secretion of IL-17B promoted the growth and metastasis of pancreatic cancer cells and enhanced the recruitment of inflammatory cells to the tumor site. Treating tumor-bearing mice with a drug that prevented IL-17B from binding to its receptor halted tumor growth and spread, resulting in increased survival.

Since [metastases](#) are the leading cause of death in pancreatic cancer patients, this drug might represent a novel therapeutic approach to defeat pancreatic cancer and prolong patient survival.



Tumor growth and metastasis have been blocked in mice 28 days after treatment with a drug that prevents IL-17B from binding to its receptor (right) compared with untreated mice (left). Credit: Wu et al., 2015

**More information:** Wu, H.-H., et al. 2015. *J. Exp. Med.* [DOI: 10.1084/jem.20141702](https://doi.org/10.1084/jem.20141702)

Provided by Rockefeller University Press

Citation: Promising new strategy to halt pancreatic cancer metastasis (2015, March 2) retrieved 5 May 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-03-strategy-halt-pancreatic-cancer-metastasis.html>

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