

Healthcare study targets cancer treatment

By Sonja Haller

THE REPUBLIC | AZCENTRAL.COM

A study at Scottsdale Healthcare has found that analyzing a person's genetic makeup to find the right chemotherapy cocktail can increase survival rates.

In some cases, the new study found, tumors shrank.

The success of these cancer trials will lead to more research, elevating Scottsdale Healthcare's reputation as a research facility. Scottsdale Healthcare collaborated with local organizations including the



Daniel Von Hoff

Translational Genomics Research Institute in Phoenix, known as TGen.

"This is something that none of these organizations could do on their own," said Mark Slater, vice president for re-

search at Scottsdale Healthcare. "Together we were able to conduct a study that has national implications."

The clinical trial, which involved 66 patients — 41 treated at Scottsdale Healthcare — involved molecular profiling of an individual's disease. The portrait, according to the study, helped tailor each individual's chemotherapy or other treatments.

Molecular profiling might indicate that a type of treatment usually used to treat lung cancer should be used to treat a patient with ovarian cancer, for example.

The patients had breast, colon, or ovarian cancers and cancers classified as miscellaneous. All the patients had late-stage cancers and had anywhere from two to six previous treatments.

"It also tells you what kind of treatment is not likely to be helpful for you. And treatments can have some pretty nasty side effects," said Slater, also head of the Scottsdale Clinical Research Insti-

tute. "And the longer we wait trying treatments that are not effective, the more the disease progresses."

The clinical studies were conducted at the Virginia G. Piper Cancer Center at Scottsdale Healthcare Shea Medical Center. Principal investigator was Dr. Daniel Von Hoff, chief scientific officer at TGen in Phoenix. The molecular profiling was performed by Caris Diagnostics in Phoenix.

Von Hoff released the study this week in Denver at the American Association for Cancer Research.

Von Hoff said the next phase in molecular profiling involves focusing on patients with colon cancer and breast cancer.

Among those with breast cancer, 44 percent experienced an increased survival period without progression of the disease. In colon cancer patients, that number was 36 percent. Of ovarian cancer patients, 20 percent experienced a

“This is something that none of these organizations could do on their own. Together we were able to conduct a study that has national implications.”

Mark Slater

Vice president for research at Scottsdale Healthcare

longer progression-free survival.

"You can taste that you can make a difference with patients that experienced those kinds of results," he said. "Especially with the additional technology. We are so anxious to apply that."

The study was conducted from late 2007 to 2009, but since then there have been advances in molecular profiling technology, Von Hoff said.