

Protein fights off cancer

United Press International
HOUSTON — Medical researchers have successfully used the natural protein, interferon, in a year-long study to reduce the size of tumors spread from kidney cancers, but experts warn "there's still a long way to go."

Dr. Jordan U. Gutterman of the University of Texas' M.D. Anderson Hospital and Tumor Institute said the significance of

the development is that kidney cancer and tumors that spread from it have been very resistant to treatment.

"It's a continued advance," he said.

The interferon pioneer called the development a small but important step forward in use of the substance, a protein found in the body in tiny amounts.

He said treating cancers spread from the kidneys is only a first step in the eventual treatment of kidney cancer itself. But, he cautioned, "There's still a long way to go."

The results of Gutterman's year-long study conducted at Anderson appear in the current issue of Cancer Research, the publication of the American Association for Cancer Research.

"The importance of this study is that (it appears) the use of a relatively non-toxic biological agent, interferon, can induce disappearance of a metastatic tumors (cancers that have spread) in patients with a tumor that previously was resistant to other methods of treatment," Gutterman said.

Dr. Frank J. Rauscher Jr., research vice president of the

American Cancer Society, said studies by other investigators already have supported Gutterman's findings.

Kidney cancer usually is fatal shortly after diagnosis. The cancer society estimates this year 18,200 new cases of kidney and urinary cancers other than blad-

der will be diagnosed, and 8,500 victims will die from the disease.

The Gutterman study involved 19 patients — 14 males and five females — ranging in age from 29 to 75 years old. All suffered from malignant tumors in their kidneys and in each case the tumors had been removed surgically.

Gutterman, along with Drs. Jorge R. Quesada, David A. Swanson and Antonio Trindale, included in the study patients whose kidney cancer had spread

to the lungs, the lymph nodes behind the breasts or other parts of the body.

To avoid contamination of the results, all 19 patients were removed from any other cancer treatment a month before the interferon test began.

The study showed that five of the patients, or 26 percent, showed a 50 percent or greater decrease in the tumors in their lungs after receiving daily interferon injections.

Two other patients, or 10.5 percent of the group, had between 25 and 50 percent reduction. Additionally, in one patient the disease had stabilized for over two months and in another patient for six months.

In three other patients there were mixed effects — both regression and progression of the tumors in the same person's body. Seven patients, or 37 percent, showed progressive disease during the study despite interferon.

Quesada said "follow-up has been short to estimate the full impact of this investigational treatment on survival and clinical benefit to the patient."

The study was supported by a grant from the National Cancer Institute, Enid Haupt Foundation, the Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation and the Interferon Foundation, and coordinated by Dr. John Kirkwood, of Yale Medical School.

The interferon was supplied through the Interferon Foundation of Houston and the State Serum Institute of the Finnish Red Cross Center in Helsinki, Finland.

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A one-wheeler is born

Jim Trevino gets a little help from his friends. Kitty Swoboda, president of Texas A&M's unicycle club, the One-Wheelers, left, and Bostick help Trevino, a senior under \$, learn to ride a unicycle.

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