

The Christus Stehlin Foundation for Cancer Research

Fact Sheet



History

Stehlin research has been changing the lives of people with **cancer for more than 40 years** by pioneering new drugs and patient therapies.

The Stehlin Foundation is dedicated to **patient-focused research**, limiting investigations to human cancers. Because of their focus on shortening the time from research to treatment, **thousands of cancer patients are alive today** as a result of the Foundation's work.

The Foundation's founder, **Dr. John S. Stehlin, Jr.**, was a visionary surgical oncologist who saw beyond existing protocols. His drive was to **improve collaboration between cancer patients, physicians providing treatment, and scientists studying the disease**. He worked as both researcher and physician until his retirement in 2002.

Dr. Stehlin stressed the importance of hope, faith, laughter and love in patient recovery. His concept of a **"Living Room,"** where patients could see family and friends, read, watch television, and generally find relief from the hospital atmosphere, became a prototype for cancer centers worldwide.

Achievements

Working with a small staff and limited facilities, the Foundation was the first to develop and apply **many cancer treatments that are now the "treatment of choice."**

In 1970, Dr. Stehlin became one of the first two surgeons in North America to treat breast cancer with **breast conserving surgery** involving partial mastectomy (lumpectomy) and radiation rather than radical mastectomy.

Stehlin was also the **first to combine heat and chemotherapy** (hyperthermic perfusion) for the treatment of patients with advanced melanomas of the arms and legs, essentially **eliminating the need for amputation and improving survival rates by 300 percent**.

Dr. Stehlin and his team pioneered the complex, extensive surgical procedure to **remove lymph nodes during colorectal surgery**, vastly improving the patient's chances for recovery.

The Foundation has been widely recognized in the scientific world as a **pioneer in cancer research**. Its breakthroughs have been documented in more than 500 scientific and medical journal articles. Some examples:

Laboratory director Dr. Beppino Giovanella pioneered the development and use of the immuno-suppressed **nude mouse** as a subject in cancer research. Today the nude

mouse **represents the final non-human studies required by the National Cancer Institute (NCI)** to test the effectiveness of anticancer drugs.

The Foundation conducted one of the **largest studies of liver cancer** ever reported by a single institution.

The National Cancer Institute engaged the Stehlin Foundation to create a library of breast cancer cells using the Foundation's nude mouse model. **Over 50 percent of the human breast cancer xenografts used worldwide today** come from the originals established by the Foundation.

Foundation researchers played an integral role in the **development of Herceptin®**, an anticancer drug now used routinely against certain aggressive breast cancers.

Stehlin is recognized as an international leader in the development and clinical testing of the **camptothecins**, a family of drugs with powerful anticancer properties. Stehlin has had two camptothecin derivatives green-lighted by the FDA for clinical (human) trials. **Even one FDA approval is a milestone achieved by less than one-tenth of 1% of applicants.**

Current Projects

CZ48 Clinical Trials – Phase I human trials of this drug developed by Stehlin are underway at UTHSC-San Antonio and University of New Mexico Cancer Center. CZ48, a derivative of camptothecin, has shown anticancer activity against breast, lung, colon, pancreas, and bladder carcinomas, melanomas, and DSRCT sarcomas.

Prostate Cancer Cell Model – Stehlin scientists will be collaborating with Baylor College of Medicine to create a broad line of tissue culture lines of human prostate cancer tumors. The lines will represent all subtypes and prognoses. As each line is characterized, the project team will make it available to the worldwide scientific community.

Hyperthermia – Stehlin researchers will continue their pioneering research into the selective sensitivity of cancer cells to heat. This project will inject magnetic nanoparticles designed to seek out cancer cells in nude mice carrying human breast cancer tumors. Researchers will be studying the optimal conditions for complete tumor destruction.

Funding

CHRISTUS Health, an international nonprofit healthcare system based in Dallas, became the Foundation's sole corporate sponsor in 2006.

With CHRISTUS Health's assistance, in 2011 Stehlin's world-class scientists moved to a new and fully equipped **27,000 square foot research facility** near the Texas Medical Center.

The Foundation's fiscal year 2012 budget is \$7.3 million. Unlike most cancer research institutions, sponsored primarily through medical schools and government grants, **Stehlin receives 100 percent of its funding from individual donors, private foundations, and corporate partners.**

Independent funding allows Stehlin scientists to **focus solely on their work fighting cancer**, speeding up the time from research bench to patient treatment, and continuing the legacy of founder Dr. Stehlin.

For more information, contact The Stehlin Foundation for Cancer Research, 713-659-1336.

Tours of the laboratory are available by request.