

## The Ludwig Institute Lausanne receives an international award for its research on cancer immunotherapy

The Lausanne branch of the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research, headed by Prof. George Coukos, fully integrated within the Lausanne University Hospital (CHUV) and the Faculty of Biology and Medicine of the University of Lausanne (UNIL), has received an award from the Society for Cancer Immunotherapy for its outstanding team contribution to the understanding, development and improvement of the results of this cutting-edge therapy.

As part of the Annual Congress marking its 35th anniversary, the SITC - Society for Immunotherapy for Cancer, the most prestigious international society in the field of cancer immunotherapy, presents its Team Science Award to the Ludwig Institute Lausanne. During an online ceremony chaired by Prof. Mario Sznol, President of the SITC, Prof. George Coukos, Director of the Ludwig Lausanne Institute, receives this award which honors research teams that have made an outstanding contribution in immunotherapy over the last 35 years.

The SITC selected the Ludwig Lausanne Institute in recognition of the long history of the very diverse contributions made by many scientists at Ludwig Lausanne, from its creation in 1973 to the present day, to the understanding of immunobiology and to improving the outcomes of cancer patients.

Prof. George Coukos, Director, Ludwig Lausanne Institute, said: «This international recognition is of particular importance. Awarded by peers, it acknowledges the team approach to science that we practice in Lausanne, and the joint efforts that we are making, under the aegis of the Swiss Cancer Center Léman, with the Department of Oncology and the other departments and services of the CHUV, the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Lausanne, the Faculty of Life Sciences of the EPFL, and the ISREC Foundation. It is also a worldwide testament for the scientific community in Lausanne, for the visionary investments made by institutions and authorities, at a time when we are taking important steps in the development of new immunotherapies.»

## **Nearly fifty years of pioneering cancer research**

The Ludwig Institute has been present in Lausanne since 1973. Under the direction of immunologist Jean-Charles Cerottini, the Lausanne branch first conducted studies on the development and functional diversification of T cells of the immune system, which play a central role in the targeting of tumours. Work in this field has also led to the development of methods for cloning of all types of T cells and tests of T cell function that have been adopted worldwide.

Extensive research was then conducted on the dynamics of T cell-mediated immune responses and the processing and presentation of the antigens that activate these cells. In partnership with Ludwig Brussels' pioneers in cancer immunology, Lausanne researchers have used this expertise to identify new cancer antigens and develop the first cancer vaccines. Antigens are still used today for the development of many immunotherapies, and the methods developed at the Ludwig Institute Lausanne to monitor immune responses in patients participating in trials remain essential tools in the field.

## **New strategies against tumours**

Since 2012, under the directorship of George Coukos, the Ludwig Lausanne Institute, fully integrated within the Lausanne University Hospital (CHUV) and the Faculty of Medicine (UNIL), has continued its tradition of basic research while focusing its efforts in translational research on individualized T cell therapies and vaccines for cancer. Scientists at the branch have conducted groundbreaking investigations of such phenomena as the microenvironment and immune constituents of brain and ovarian tumors, the identification, evaluation and use of patient-specific "neoantigens" for individualized immunotherapy, and the mechanisms by which cancer metabolism undermines the anti-tumor immune response. These investigations have yielded novel strategies for cancer therapy.

## **A massive support**

In collaboration with public authorities and philanthropy, Ludwig Research Cancer has invested tens of millions of Swiss francs in Lausanne in research support and infrastructure. The Ludwig Institute Lausanne is one of the founders of the [Swiss Cancer Center Léman](#).

The Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research is a non-profit organization founded in 1971 under the leadership of American businessman Daniel K. Ludwig. Since its inception, it has contributed more than \$2.7 billion to cancer research. Ludwig Cancer Research is an international collaborative network of leading scientists who have been pioneering cancer research and making breakthrough discoveries for nearly 50 years. The organization supports six sites in the United States and three in Europe.