

Prestigious Department of Defense Grant Awarded to APCRC – Q’s

Dr Carolina Soekmadji

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Dr Carolina Soekmadji, Postdoctoral Fellow at the Australian Prostate Cancer Research Centre (APCRC-Q), has been awarded a highly competitive and prestigious Department of Defense FY11 Prostate Cancer Postdoctoral Training Award.

Dr Soekmadji won the US\$115,000 United States Army funded grant for her project *Exosome biomarkers: Defining prognosis for drug and castrate-resistant prostate cancer*.

Dr Soekmadji’s research investigates the use of exosomes, tiny vesicles secreted by tumor cells into the blood or urine that contain a set of proteins and RNA resembling the cells of origin. These can be used as biomarkers to predict whether patients will respond or be resistant to certain treatment, avoiding therapy where it is unlikely to work. Success in this area of research would allow for a non-invasive characterization of a patient cancer progression or treatment response through a simple blood test.

“This study will allow for the discovery and characterization of potential novel *biomarkers* which will help to predict the response of prostate cancer patients, allowing patients and clinicians to make better informed decisions in regards to treatment options,” Dr Soekmadji said.

The researcher’s PhD involved studying exocytosis and endocytosis pathways (secretion); this post doctoral-award enables her to use her knowledge in the cancer field – in particular, to define biomarkers secreted by prostate cancer that may indicate the patient’s response towards treatment, thus allowing a personalised treatment for each patient.

Dr Soekmadji looks forward to discovering the answers to her research. “I am very grateful to my mentors, who have been very supportive, and also my colleagues at APCRC – Q who have offered their help generously and provided a stimulating environment to win the war against prostate cancer,” Dr Soekmadji said.