

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – January 3, 2003

VANCOUVER RESEARCHERS FINDING WHO'S AT RISK FOR DIABETES

Vancouver - Scientists at the BC Research Institute are a step closer to determining who is at risk for developing type 1 diabetes.

Located at the Children's and Women's Health Centre in Vancouver, researchers have designed a novel approach to detecting the cells which mistakenly attack the pancreatic islets that produce insulin and leads to type 1 diabetes. This study is being published this month in the prestigious Journal of Clinical Investigation.

"The results of this study raise the possibility that we will soon be able to do a blood test to screen for predisposition to type 1 diabetes," says Dr. Rusung Tan, lead investigator and senior author of the study. "This will mean that treatment or preventive measures may be used before any serious damage occurs."

Type 1 diabetes develops most often in children but can also appear in adults. Dr. Tan's work includes understanding how the immune system functions and how it may be used to control disease.

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