

LTRC Concept Sheet # 08-03-0002

ROLE OF RELAXIN IN IDIOPATHIC PULMONARY FIBROSIS

ABSTRACT

Several lines of evidence suggest significant gender differences in idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF), which is similar to patterns noted in other fibrotic disorders. Multiple studies have reported the incidence and prevalence of IPF to be higher in male patients. There is also evidence suggesting that female gender is associated with improved survival and less rapid progression of disease in IPF patients. The etiology of these differences is as of yet unknown, but the peptide hormone “relaxin” likely plays a role. Relaxin is produced in higher levels in women of all ages as compared to men and in animal models appears to have significant antifibrotic and vasodilatory properties. We believe that the naturally occurring higher levels of relaxin in women offer protection against fibrosis and pulmonary hypertension leading to prolonged survival.