American Cancer Society and St. Baldrick's Foundation Award Millions in Research Grants to Fight Childhood Cancer

The American Cancer Society and the St. Baldrick's Foundation awarded nearly $3 million to researchers fighting to end childhood cancer. The awards come from a partnership formed between the two organizations in 2019 to provide support for childhood cancer research. These grants will accelerate childhood cancer research with the goals of understanding and discovering new treatment options and improving care and survival in children with cancer. Through this collaboration, the American Cancer Society and the St. Baldrick's Foundation will unlock the potential of existing clinical trial cohorts, leveraging data, biospecimens and other trial resources to hopefully speed the development and delivery of new cancer drugs for children.

"Cancer treatment drugs specifically for children are limited. Most current cancer treatment drugs were developed and tested in adults prior to use in children," said Ellie Daniels, MD, MPH, Interim Senior Vice President of Extramural Discovery Science at the American Cancer Society. "These grants and the collaborative work between the American Cancer Society and the St. Baldrick's Foundation will help develop more novel and effective treatments that will lead to more personalized care and will ultimately save more children's lives."

This first round of research grant awards will be going to six grantees with research beginning July 2021. The grants include funding for research on some of the deadliest childhood cancers, including neuroblastoma, pediatric acute lymphoma, and acute myeloid leukemia (AML).

"Each clinical trial is designed to answer a specific research question – to show which of two treatment protocols achieves the best results for the most patients. The St. Baldrick's Foundation and American Cancer Society grants add a very important layer to that, giving researchers the ability to take the information from a clinical trial that is already happening and learn so much *more* – including the *reasons* behind those trials results," said Kathleen Ruddy, St. Baldrick's Foundation CEO. "Maximizing what we learn from a clinical trial not only helps accelerate the development of more effective treatments, it also increases the impact of each child's participation in the trial. These grants were made possible by donations made to our two organizations specifically for this purpose. We look forward to the next round of these partnership grants later this year."

American Cancer Society and St. Baldrick's Foundation Grants were awarded to the following institutions projects:

Pilot Accelerator Grant (4): $240,000 grants for two-year projects, intended to include high-risk/high-reward research that tests feasibility and generates preliminary data to open new and highly innovative areas of investigation.

- Kelly Goldsmith, MD, Emory University -- Biomarkers of GD2-Targeted Chemoimmunotherapy During Frontline Therapy and After Relapse of High-Risk Neuroblastoma.
- Andras Herczey, MD, Baylor College of Medicine -- Defining Cellular and Molecular Correlates of Therapeutic Activity in a Phase 1 Clinical Trial of CAR-NKT Cells in Children with Neuroblastoma.
- Jatinder Lamba, PhD, University of Florida, Gainesville -- Transcriptomic and Pharmacogenetic Based Prognostic Score to Guide Therapy in Pediatric AML.
- Anders Kolb, MD, Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children / Nemours Children's Clinic - Delaware Valley of The Nemours Foundation / Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children -- Validating Detection of Novel Biomarkers for the Pediatric Acute Leukemia (PedAL) Initiative Sub-trial.

Team Accelerator Grant (2): $960,000 awards for four-year projects, designed to foster innovative and interdisciplinary collaborative research to promote transformational advances in childhood cancer research.

- Yael Mosse, MD , The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia -- Improving Patient Outcomes for ALK Mutant Neuroblastoma Through Precision Molecular Targeting and Monitoring.
- Soheil Meshinchi, MD, PhD, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center -- Integrated Transcriptome-Based Prognostic and Disease Monitoring Strategies in Childhood AML.

Each funded project is partnered with an active clinical trial to leverage the trial's data to gain new information that will help lead to new discoveries. Utilizing existing clinical trial cohorts creates the opportunity to accelerate discoveries and more quickly impact mortality and quality of life for childhood cancer patients.
