American Cancer Society with financial support from the Lisa Dean Moseley Foundation Awards $9.8 Million in Grants to Support Breakthrough Cancer Stem Cell Research

ATLANTA, Feb. 9, 2023 -- The American Cancer Society (ACS) and the Lisa Dean Moseley Foundation have approved $9,823,000 in research grants to 12 principal investigators from 10 different U.S. institutions. The recipients all seek to better understand how cancer cells that resemble normal stem cells adapt to evade detection and treatment and to translate these discoveries into improved care and outcomes for cancer patients.

The researchers, identified through a rigorous peer review process, will form a consortium to foster collaborations, accelerate research impact, and advance the cancer stem cell field by prioritizing research standards, assays, and critical questions.

The consortium will be led by Jeremy Rich, MD, PhD, Professor and deputy director of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center Hillman Cancer Center, a nationally recognized neurosurgeon and cancer researcher, who has made seminal contributions to the cancer stem cell field. In addition to leading these investigators to work as a collaborative community, Dr. Rich will derive and characterize cancer stem cell models from diverse patients to determine biological differences with the goal to improve cancer treatments for all people.

“This consortium has the potential to uncover significant breakthroughs in cancer care and outcomes for patients,” said Dr. William Dahut, chief scientific officer for the American Cancer Society. “We are deeply grateful to the Lisa Dean Moseley Foundation for their generous support and partnership which made this innovative program possible. We are also thrilled to have an esteemed clinician-scientist with an impressive track record for leadership and mentorship leading the consortium. His commitment to translating discoveries into meaningful clinical impact and desire to improve cancer care for all people highly aligns with the American Cancer Society mission.”

“Partnering with the American Cancer Society on this leading-edge, long-term Cancer Stem Cell Consortium aptly reflects the Lisa Dean Moseley Foundation’s mission statement – to fund crucial scientific research that will make a difference in people’s lives,” said William J. Martin, the President of the Moseley Foundation. “This collaborative research model will encourage talented and innovative scientists to learn even more about the contours of many different cancer types.”

The 12 Principal Investigators involved in the Consortium bring diverse expertise, perspectives, and experimental approaches for testing their innovative ideas for reducing the burdens of cancer:

Interdisciplinary Team Leads:

- Rumela Chakrabarti PhD, University of Miami Health System, “Understand the function of SOCS3 High Natural Killer cells on Wnt responsive CSCs in triple-negative breast cancer”
- Harvey Kornblum MD, PhD, UCLA. “Understanding radiation-induced phenotype conversion in order to target glioma stem cells”
- Huiping Liu, MD, PhD, Northwestern University “Proteomic analysis and targeting of circulating tumor stem cell clusters in breast cancer”
- Hanna Mikkola MD, PhD, UCLA, “Unraveling the stemness program in MECOM rearranged leukemias”

Research Scholars:

- Grant Challen, PhD, Washington University in St. Louis, “Clonal Evolution in MPN as a Prototypical Cancer Stem Cell Model”
- Mo Motamedi, PhD, Massachusetts General Hospital, “Epigenetic reprogramming of cancer stem cells”
- Robert Signer, PhD, University of California San Diego, “Synergistically Disrupting Proteostasis in Acute

Myeloid Leukemia Stem Cells”
- Monica Venere, PhD, The Ohio State University, “Targeting FACT to shift the undifferentiated state of ZFTA-RelA fusion driven ependymoma”
- Rajeev Vibhakar, MD, PhD, University of Colorado Denver, “Epigenetic control of ATRT Cancer stem cells”

Postdoctoral Fellows:

- George Eng, MD, PhD, Massachusetts General Hospital, “Leveraging Differential Wnt Dependencies for Colon Cancer Therapy”
- Rachel Lex, PhD, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center, “Synergy between cell autonomous and non-autonomous signaling in site-specific tumorigenesis”

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About the American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society is a leading cancer-fighting organization with a vision to end cancer as we know it, for everyone. For more than 100 years, we have been improving the lives of people with cancer and their families as the only organization combating cancer through advocacy, research, and patient support. We are committed to ensuring everyone has an opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer. To learn more, visit cancer.org or call our 24/7 helpline at 1-800-227-2345. Connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

About the Lisa Dean Moseley Foundation

Based in Wilmington, Delaware, the Lisa Dean Moseley Foundation is a non-profit organization that supports basic medical and scientific research, with a special interest on the role of stem cells. The Lisa Dean Moseley Foundation generally accomplishes these goals by funding and collaborating with key research organizations such as the American Cancer Society to support research and clinical programs that will improve outcomes and save lives.

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