

Potential Breakthrough in the Search for New Treatment Options for Esophageal Cancer Patients

(NEW YORK, February 11, 2020) – [Kishore Guda, DVM, PhD](#), an associate professor of oncology at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, has been awarded \$200,000 by [The DeGregorio Family Foundation](#) and the Price Family Foundation—partnering with the Savone Family and The Esophageal Cancer Awareness Association.

This award will support Dr. Guda’s research at the Case Comprehensive Cancer Center on establishing a deeper understanding of the TGFbeta cellular pathway and its impact on the development of esophageal adenocarcinoma (EAC).

EAC is a highly deadly cancer, the incidence of which has increased more than fivefold in the past three decades, the fastest for any solid tumor¹. The prognosis for EAC patients remains poor, with five-year survival remaining a dismally low 18%.



We are pleased to receive this generous support from the DeGregorio Family Foundation that will enable us to evaluate new treatment modalities for combating this increasingly prevalent and deadly cancer.

-Dr. Kishore Guda

Therapeutic options for patients with EAC are very limited, with the majority of these cancers developing resistance to standard chemoradiation treatments. Targeted therapies, on the other hand, are virtually non-existent. Inadequate understanding of the mechanisms driving EAC progression has limited the development of effective prevention, detection, and targeted treatment strategies—and is a critical unmet clinical need in this lethal malignancy.

Dr. Guda's research has led to the discovery that the growth of EACs is dependent on cellular pathways, including TGFbeta—this pathway switches from being a growth suppressor to

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growth promoter during the development of EAC, contrary to its function in other gastrointestinal cancers.

With this grant, Dr. Guda will pursue mechanistic studies to comprehensively dissect the paradoxical effects of the TGFbeta pathway in this disease and will assess the anti-tumor efficacy of a new generation of pharmacologic agents targeting the TGFbeta-pathway in preclinical animal models. These proposed studies seek to unravel novel mechanisms driving EAC progression, as well as lay the framework for subsequent clinical trials to evaluate anti-TGFbeta therapy as a new targeted-treatment approach in esophageal cancer patients.

The DeGregorio Family Foundation, founded in 2006 after a 10th member of the DeGregorio family died of stomach cancer, has raised close to \$4 million to fund innovative research focused on curing gastric and esophageal cancers. Lynn DeGregorio, President and Founder, stated, "With the unprecedented growth in esophageal cancer diagnoses, our efforts to identify and fund innovative research becomes all the more essential. We are encouraged by Dr. Guda's research and are proud to announce that we are funding his tireless efforts towards finding a cure."

Commenting on his award, Dr. Guda said, "We are pleased to receive this generous support from the DeGregorio Family Foundation that will enable us to evaluate new treatment modalities for combating this increasingly prevalent and deadly cancer."



The DeGregorio Family Foundation funds innovative research focused on curing gastric and esophageal cancers—[click here to donate](#) and...

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¹ Heiko Pohl, H. Gilbert Welch, The Role of Overdiagnosis and Reclassification in the Marked Increase of Esophageal Adenocarcinoma Incidence, *JNCI: Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, Volume 97, Issue 2, 19 January 2005, Pages 142–146, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jnci/djio24>