

## **Grant Awarded to Enhance the Effectiveness of Immunotherapy in Gastric Cancer**

NEW YORK, Feb. 17, 2022 – [The DeGregorio Family Foundation](#) with the support of the Price Family Foundation and the [Esophageal Cancer Awareness Association](#) has awarded \$175,000 to Dawit Kidane-Mulat, PhD, Assistant Professor, College of Pharmacy at The University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Kidane-Mulat is working to enhance the effectiveness of immunotherapy in gastric cancers, which now has a very low success rate, in the five percent range.

The overarching goal of this study is to harness XRCC1-deficient gastroesophageal cancer cells that will likely enhance the efficacy of immunotherapy response. Dr. Kidane-Mulat will examine how defective XRCC1 and targeting DNA damage response contributes to aberrant innate immune cells inflammatory response. He and his lab will pursue how inhibition of ATM activity in XRCC1 deficient/low expressing gastric cells induces DNA sensor cGAS/STING mediated aberrant inflammatory response. This work lays the foundation for additional in-depth preclinical studies, and for the development of novel therapeutic strategies for stomach cancer.



Commenting on his award, Dr. Kidane-Mulat said, “The DeGregorio Family Foundation research grant is an outstanding opportunity; I am extremely grateful. As a result of this award, I will be able to generate a long line of research into understanding the basis of DNA repair/response and immunotherapy treatment in stomach cancer. This grant award will open a new opportunity to propel the field forward and build a solid foundation for future immunotherapy therapeutic strategies in gastric cancer.



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***- Dawit Kidane-Mulat***

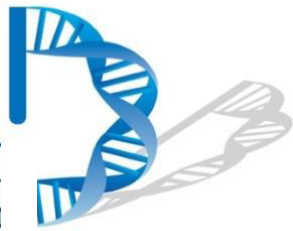
In 2020, gastric and esophageal cancers combined to kill over 1.3 million people worldwide—making it the second-leading cause of cancer-related death. Patients continue to face poor prognoses following gastric and esophageal cancer diagnoses due to their chemo-resistant behavior and ability to metastasize.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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The DeGregorio Family Foundation, founded in 2006 after a 10th member of the DeGregorio family died of stomach cancer, has raised more than \$7 million to fund innovative research focused on curing gastric and esophageal cancers. “Dr. Kidane-Mulat’s grant could be paradigm-changing,” stated Lynn DeGregorio, President and Founder, “We’re honored to fund deserving research like this that has the potential to significantly improve how we treat gastroesophageal cancers.”



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

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