

Additional Funding Awarded to Howard University Researcher to Enhance Effectiveness of Immunotherapy in Gastric Cancer

NEW YORK, Aug. 11, 2023 – [The DeGregorio Family Foundation](#) with the support of the Price Family Foundation and the [Esophageal Cancer Awareness Association](#) has awarded \$87,500 to Dawit Kidane-Mulat, PhD, Associate Professor at Howard University College of Medicine to complete his grant. 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 is examining how defective XRCC1 and targeting DNA damage response contributes to aberrant innate immune cells inflammatory response. He and his lab are pursuing 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, “I am grateful to the DeGregorio Family Foundation. As a result of this award, I am generating a long line of research into understanding the basis of DNA repair/response and immunotherapy treatment in stomach cancer. This grant award is opening 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

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making it the second-leading cause of cancer-related deaths. Patients continue to face poor prognoses following gastric and esophageal cancer diagnoses due to their chemo-resistant behavior and ability to metastasize.

“Dr. Kidane-Mulat’s grant could be paradigm-changing,” concluded 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, founded in 2006 after a 10th member of the DeGregorio family died of stomach cancer, has raised more than \$8 million to fund innovative research focused on curing gastric and esophageal cancers. It is the only foundation funding research grants for both of these cancers.



The DeGregorio Family Foundation is the only foundation funding research grants for both gastric and esophageal cancers—[click here to donate](#) and...

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