



The Lustgarten Foundation Announces Mandar Muzumdar, MD, Yale Cancer Center & Andrew Lowy, MD, University of California San Diego, Moores Cancer Center to Receive 2022 Innovation and Collaboration Program Grants

WOODBURY, N.Y., Nov 04, 2022 -- The Lustgarten Foundation announced today that the 2022 Innovation and Collaboration Program grants will be awarded to **Mandar Muzumdar, MD, Co-Director of Pancreas Program, Center for Gastrointestinal Cancers at Smilow Cancer Hospital and Yale Cancer Center** for his study *Dietary oleic acid reprograms pancreatic lipid metabolism to drive cancer development* and **Andrew Lowy, MD, Director of Surgical Oncology at UC San Diego, and Associate Director, Moores Cancer Center** for his study *Building on Kras Inhibition in Pancreas Cancer: Defining Rationale Pairings to Combat Resistance and Enhance Responses to Immunotherapy*.

“I want to thank the Lustgarten Foundation for their support,” said Muzumdar. “The unique team I’ve assembled is poised to nominate specific fats within our diets as pancreatic cancer drivers and inform novel targeted dietary or drug-based interventions to prevent or treat this terrible disease.”

Muzumdar’s study will explore the most advanced cancers, which remain untreatable by combination chemotherapy, targeted therapies, and immunotherapies. By deciphering the mechanisms that govern the initiation and progression from early to advanced cancer, Muzumdar and team hope to facilitate the development of novel strategies for prevention and therapy.

The Lustgarten Foundation Innovation and Collaboration Program’s intent is to provide seed funding for investigators who have highly innovative research with significant potential to accelerate the mission to transform pancreatic cancer into a curable disease. The Innovation and Collaboration Program awards will provide \$110,000 to researchers for one year.

“The Lustgarten Foundation’s generosity will allow us to study an effective KRAS inhibition strategy that circumvents adaptive resistance,” said Andrew Lowy, MD. “Pancreatic cancer is a deadly disease that lacks curative therapeutic approaches for many patients. A mutation in the tumor driver gene KRAS is found in most pancreatic cancers. This would be a significant advance for PDAC patients.

Given 90% of pancreatic ductal adenocarcinomas (PDAC) harbor oncogenic KRAS mutations, Lowy’s research aims to define the optimal drug regimen to maximize the killing of cancer cells while also preventing common resistance mechanisms. It will also explore the potential of KRAS inhibitors to promote immunotherapy response.

“We believe research is fundamental to realizing the Lustgarten Foundation’s vision of a future with pancreatic cancer cures,” said Linda Tantawi, Lustgarten Foundation CEO, “both Dr. Muzumdar & Dr. Lowy’s projects are tackling pancreatic cancer from a different perspective than we typically see. We know that time is everything and these works reflect a promising shift in how we understand, prevent, and treat this devastating disease.”

About the Lustgarten Foundation

The Lustgarten Foundation is the largest private funder of pancreatic cancer research in the world. Based in Woodbury, N.Y., the Foundation's mission is to cure pancreatic cancer by funding scientific and clinical research related to the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of pancreatic cancer; providing research information and clinical support services to patients, caregivers, and individuals at high risk; and increasing public awareness and hope for those dealing with this disease. Since its inception, the Lustgarten Foundation has directed nearly \$250 million to research and has assembled the best scientific minds with the hope that one day, a cure can be found. Thanks to separate funding to support administrative expenses, 100% of your donation goes directly to pancreatic cancer research. For more information, visit www.lustgarten.org.

About Yale Cancer Center

Yale Cancer Center combines a tradition of innovative cancer treatment and quality care for our patients. A National Cancer Institute (NCI) designated comprehensive cancer center for over 45 years, Yale Cancer Center is one of only 54 Centers in the nation.

Yale Cancer Center is a collaboration between nationally and internationally renowned scientists and physicians at Yale School of Medicine and Smilow Cancer Hospital. This partnership enables the Center to provide the best approaches for prevention, detection, diagnosis, and treatment for cancer.

About Moores Cancer Center

Moores Cancer Center at UC San Diego Health is one of only 54 National Cancer Institute (NCI)-designated comprehensive cancer centers in the nation and the only provider of multidisciplinary, research-driven detection, treatment, survivorship and prevention of cancer in San Diego County. Its 360 member scientists and clinicians represent 22 UC San Diego specialty departments, Rady Children's Hospital, San Diego State University and the La Jolla Institute of Immunology. MCC was founded and received its NCI designation in 1978.