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New Discoveries in Metastatic Breast Cancer Can’t Wait: How Independent Scientific Research is Moving Forward Patient Care

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Until the 20th century, breast cancer was considered an unspeakable condition, and in general, cancer was seen as an incurable disease.[1] Thanks to increases in funding, research, and patient advocacy, there is greater awareness of and care for people living with breast cancer.[2] But, for people with the most advanced forms of breast cancer, there still remain significant gaps in funding, research, and care.

The Current State of Metastatic Breast Cancer Research

Every year, millions of people around the world are diagnosed with breast cancer,[3] and between 20-30% of these cases will progress to advanced or metastatic breast cancer (mBC).[4] While early stage breast cancer can often be cured, mBC remains incurable. An estimated 626,000 women and men die of breast cancer every year, with metastatic disease the cause of nearly all these deaths.[5]

Clearly, more research is needed to improve outcomes for people living with mBC. Billions of dollars are invested into cancer research every year, but research funding for mBC accounts for only 7% of the total breast cancer research investment.[6] At Pfizer, we share the goal of finding cures for mBC with scientists, doctors, patient advocates, and institutions from all over the world. Our shared goal is ultimately why Pfizer administers the Breast Cancer Competitive Research Grants Programs.

Breast Cancer Competitive Research Grant Programs

Through the Breast Cancer Competitive Research Grants programs, Pfizer funds organizations dedicated to mBC research and patient care. Through the most recent rounds of grants, Pfizer received proposals from 68 different countries and awarded funding to 43 new research projects.

These projects support independent clinical research that can improve our understanding of breast cancer epidemiology, patient populations, and the treatment landscape; or expand our understanding of gaps in research, patient care, and patient needs.

If you're interested in learning more about Pfizer's Competitive Grants Programs, click here.

Recipients of Pfizer Breast Cancer Competitive Grants

The below projects were selected to receive grants in 2020 through the Pfizer Breast Cancer Competitive Grants Program:

- ○ Dr. Hikmat Abdel-Razeq, King Hussein Cancer Center, **Jordan**
  - A study to establish patterns and prevalence of germline BRCA1 & BRCA 2 mutations among high-risk breast cancer patients in the Middle East.
- ○ Dr. Ivan Bieche, UNICANCER, **France**
  - A translational study, in partnership with UCBG and GINECO, exploring mechanisms of resistance to first line combination treatment for hormone receptor positive (HR+)/ human epidermal growth factor receptor 2-negative (HER2)- advanced breast cancer.
- ○ Dr. Ivan Bustillo-Chams, Fundacion Hospital Universidad del Norte, **Colombia**
  - A study to develop a framework of evidence-based tools to guide therapeutic decision making for patients with locally advanced/metastatic HR+/HER2- breast cancer patients in Latin American countries.
- ○ Dr. Rama Rao Damerla, Kasturba Medical College, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, **India**
  - A study to improve patient outcomes by increasing access to genetic counseling, testing, and targeted therapies in patients with hereditary breast cancer.
- ○ Dr. Ho Gwo Fuang, Cancer Research Malaysia, **Malaysia**
  - A study that assesses PARP inhibition in Asian metastatic breast cancer patients with a homologous recombination deficiency signature.

- Dr. Seock-Ah Im, Seoul National University, **South Korea**
  - A study investigating the role of biomarkers other than germline BRCA mutation in monotherapy treatment of advanced breast cancer.
- Dr. Takayuki Iwamoto, Okayama University Hospital, **Japan**
  - A study to determine whether the 21-gene recurrence score can predict the progression of advanced/metastatic HR+/HER2- breast cancer.
- Dr. Soo Chin Lee, National University Cancer Institute of Singapore, **Singapore**
  - A study that develops an artificial intelligence chatbot to provide customized, pre-consultation education for probands suspected to have hereditary breast ovarian cancer.
- Dr. Wendy Chan Wing Lok, The University of Hong Kong, **China**
  - A study to investigate the feasibility and efficacy of a smartphone app-based education program on exercise capacity, symptom management, and health-related quality of life in patients with adjuvant or metastatic breast cancer.
- Dr. Taisa Manuela Bonfim Machado Lopes, Federal University of Bahia, **Brazil**
  - An analysis of clinical, molecular, and epidemiological characteristics between male and female breast cancer patients in Brazil.
- Dr. Solomon Kibudde, Uganda Cancer Institute, **Uganda**
  - A study that strengthens breast cancer care coordination through training primary care providers and community patient navigators.
- Dr. Dal Molin and Dr. Thiago William Jorge, BP - A Beneficência Portuguesa de São Paulo, **Brazil**
  - A study to evaluate patient-reported quality of life outcomes in metastatic breast cancer patients using a smartphone app.
- Dr. Afonso Nazario and Dr. Vanessa Monteiro Sanvido, Universidade Federal de São Paulo, **Brazil**
  - A prospective study of outcomes in relation to health care coverage of patients with HR+/HER2+ metastatic breast cancer in Brazil.
- Dr. Nixon Niyonzima, Uganda Cancer Institute, **Uganda**
  - A longitudinal analysis of circulating tumor DNA in metastatic breast cancer patients to assess treatment response and identify potential mutations involved in acquired resistance.
- Dr. Adeleye Omisore, Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital Complex, **Nigeria**
  - A study that establishes a novel, community-based breast cancer program to address delayed presentation, and lack of access to diagnostics and treatment facilities in South-West Nigeria.
- Dr. Alicia Okines, The Royal Marsden Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, **England**
  - A study that evaluates combination treatments for estrogen receptor positive (ER+)/ HER2- breast cancer patients.
- Dr. Melinda Telli, Stanford University School of Medicine, **United States**
  - A study that looks into PARP inhibitor monotherapy for PALB2-mutated advanced breast cancer.
- Dr. Mylin A. Torres, Winship Cancer Institute, Emory University School of Medicine, **United States**
  - Multi-institutional pilot study of PARP inhibition, radiotherapy, and immunotherapy in patients with gBRCA wild-type, PD-L1+ metastatic triple negative breast cancer.
- Dr. Hongxia Wang, Shanghai General Hospital, **China**
  - A retrospective analysis of gene mutations and resistance/sensitivity in the PALOMA 2 trial.

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4. O’Shaughnessy. “Extending survival with chemotherapy in metastatic breast cancer.” Oncologist 2005;10 Suppl 3:20-9.

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