

Caring for Carcinoid Foundation links lab, clinic in search of a cure

The Caring for Carcinoid Foundation has given \$500,000 to support the laboratory research of DFCI's Ramesh Shivdasani, MD, PhD. This funding follows an earlier gift of \$250,000 to support the clinical research of Dana-Farber's Matthew Kulke, MD. Together, these two gifts connect the work from the lab and clinic.

The foundation created this link to rapidly achieve its mission

to discover a cure for carcinoid. At age 29, Nancy O'Hagan was diagnosed with this rare gastrointestinal neuroendocrine cancer. She and her husband, Patrick, founded the non-profit foundation in December 2004.

"The Caring for Carcinoid Foundation simultaneously funds genetic, molecular, and clinical research," said Nancy. "Lab-clinic collaboration brings together multiple disciplines to foster creativity and insight in each area of research, and it will ultimately accelerate the path to a cure for carcinoid cancer."



Ramesh Shivdasani, MD, PhD, is determining how normal cells might transform into neuroendocrine tumors, thanks to support from the Caring for Carcinoid Foundation.

Experts now believe that future cures for cancer will be in the form of targeted therapies. These therapies require first that cancer is understood at the level of the target cell. The foundation's gift will make this type of research possible. Shivdasani's lab will map the molecular basis and biological pathways of normal gastrointestinal (GI) cell development and differentiation. Such a map will enable him to determine how normal GI cells become malignant.

By bringing this science to neuroendocrine tumors, he aims to outline the key pathways of neuroendocrine cell growth. Shivdasani's research will link with Kulke's research to yield innovative, targeted therapies.

"The Caring for Carcinoid Foundation recognizes that Dana-Farber is unique among cancer institutes for fostering this partnership," Shivdasani said. "It is our hope that by working collaboratively, we will identify potential drug targets to treat this disease." ■