



Tufts-NEMC Physician-Researcher Andrew Leiter, MD, PhD, Is Awarded 250,000 Dollars Carcinoid Tumor Research Grant

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The Caring for Carcinoid Foundation has awarded a 250,000 Dollar grant to Andrew B. Leiter, MD, PhD, of Tufts-NEMC's Gastroenterology Division. The 20-month grant will support Leiter's research using genome-wide screening to identify factors that determine how enteroendocrine cells differentiate and acquire properties of specialized serotonin cells, from which gastrointestinal carcinoid tumors are believed to arise. Other Medical Center researchers involved in the research include Mark Hearn, PhD, and Mary Petry, MS.

Carcinoid is a rare form of neuroendocrine cancer for which there are no effective therapies for unresectable metastatic or locally advanced disease. According to the American Cancer Society, approximately 11,000 to 12,000 carcinoid tumors are diagnosed each year in the United States, about half of which occur in the digestive tract.

"This project will help identify the factors that direct differentiation in serotonin cells and distinguish them from other endocrine cells," Leiter said. "We hope it will also lead to a better understanding of what cell types become carcinoids and allow for the creation of accurate targeted therapies."

The **Caring for Carcinoid Foundation** is the leading non-profit funder of carcinoid cancer and neuroendocrine cancer research, and awards research grants to scientists whose work will unlock the genetic causes of carcinoid and neuroendocrine cancers and lead to new, genetically targeted therapies. For more information, visit the foundation's web site at <http://www.caringforcarcinoid.org>.

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