

# Section of Hematology and Medical Oncology

## Newsletter



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### NEJM Article: CRISPR-Cas9 Gene Editing for Sickle Cell Disease and $\beta$ -Thalassemia



Martin  
Steinberg,  
MD

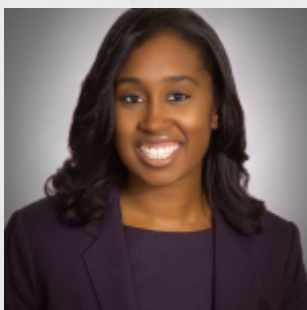
[Martin Steinberg](#) has been a member of a team of scientists, hematologists and transplant physicians working with Vertex Pharmaceuticals and CRISPR Therapeutics to develop genome editing in autologous hematopoietic stem and progenitor cells to treat sickle cell anemia and beta thalassemia.

The first results were reported at the Plenary Session of ASH on Dec. 6 (Frangoul et al. Safety and Efficacy of CTX001 in Patients with Transfusion-Dependent  $\beta$ -Thalassemia and Sickle Cell Disease: Early Results from the Climb THAL-111 and Climb SCD-121 Studies of Autologous CRISPR-CAS9-Modified CD34+ Hematopoietic Stem and Progenitor Cells) and in the N Engl J Med on Dec 5, 2020 (Frangoul et al. CRISPR-Cas9 Gene Editing for Sickle Cell Disease and  $\beta$ -Thalassemia).

This the first-in-human use of gene editing to treat genetic disease and proof-of-principle that this approach can lead to a functional cure of  $\beta$  hemoglobinopathies. [Paper Link](#).

# New Fellows for Academic Year 2021-2022

We are thrilled to announce our new fellows for academic year 2021-2022!



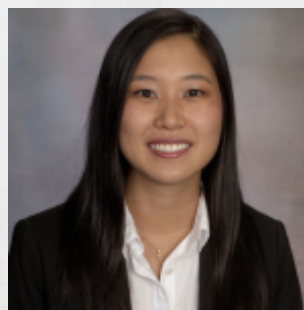
**Britney Bell, MD**

**Residency:**

Creighton Health  
Care Alliance

**Medical School:**

Creighton University  
School of Medicine



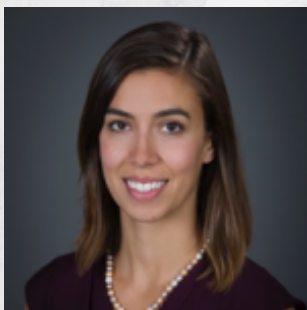
**Lesley Wu, MD**

**Residency:**

Mount Sinai Beth  
Israel

**Medical School:**

Rutgers New Jersey  
Medical School



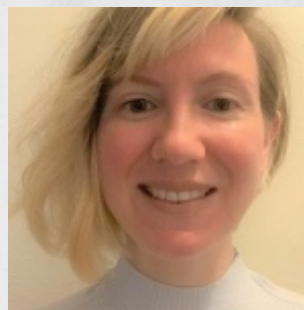
**Claire Smith, MD**

**Residency:**

Duke University  
Hospital

**Medical School:**

Duke University  
School of Medicine



**Evgenia Granina,  
MD (Geri Onc)**

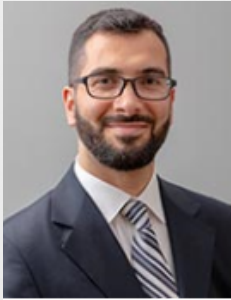
**Residency:**

Virginia  
Commonwealth  
University

**Medical School:**

Albany Medical  
College

# Grants



Umit Tapan, MD



David Hughes,  
PharmD, BCOP



Jasmine Patel,  
PharmD, BCOP



Bhavesh Shah,  
RPh, BCOP

**Umit Tapan, MD; David Hughes, PharmD, BCOP; Jasmine Patel, PharmD, BCOP; and Bhavesh Shah, RPh, BCOP** received a grant for \$250,000 through Pfizer for “Improving Biomarker Driven Precision Therapy in NSCLC: The Importance of an Integrated Multidisciplinary Approach” last week. This was part of a competitive grant process through Pfizer that was awarded to only two centers across the United States. This initiative is comprised of an education series over the next two years, primarily focused on addressing racial and socioeconomic disparities that impede access to healthcare. It will focus on three key areas:

1. Best practices for optimal biomarker testing in NSCLC and the need to understand barriers impeding testing
2. Understanding new/novel targeted therapies for NSCLC including clinical data to direct treatment decisions
3. Management of treatment-related toxicities that limit clinical benefit and may negatively impact quality of life

The unique aspects of BU/BMC’s patient population, multi-disciplinary thoracic oncology team (comprised of oncologists, molecular pathologists, interventional radiologists, pharmacists), and our embedded specialty pharmacy services will provide realistic approaches to optimal management for metastatic NSCLC.



Nana Addo-  
Tabiri, MD, PhD

**Dr. Nana Addo-Tabiri** was granted a subcontract from Massachusetts General Hospital for a proposed study entitled, “Development and implementation of electronic decision aids for genetic testing in inherited cancer syndromes.”

# Grants



Chris Heaphy,  
PhD

**Dr. Chris Heaphy** was granted a subcontract from an R01 grant at Johns Hopkins for a proposed study entitled "Stromal senescence in lethal prostate cancer: a novel target for prognosis and therapy."

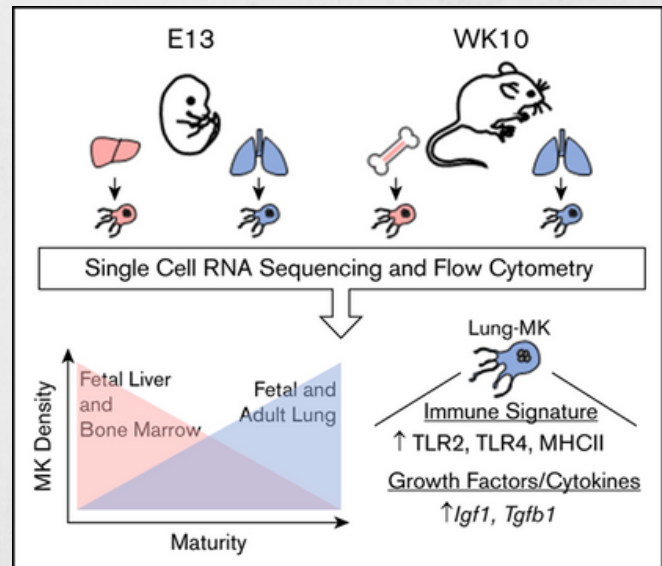
# Publications



Isabel  
Dominguez, PhD

**Dr. Isabel Dominguez** and **Dr. Barbara Guerra** (University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark) published a paper in Cellular Physiology & Biochemistry entitled "Down-Regulation of CK2 $\alpha$  Leads to Up-Regulation of the Cyclin-Dependent Kinase Inhibitor p27KIP1 in Conditions Unfavorable for the Growth of Myoblast Cells." [Paper link](#)

**Anthony Yeung**, an MD/PhD student in the Murphy Lab, published a new paper characterizing the lung-resident megakaryocyte: Lung MKs display a robust immune signature and may be better primed for platelet production! [Paper link](#)

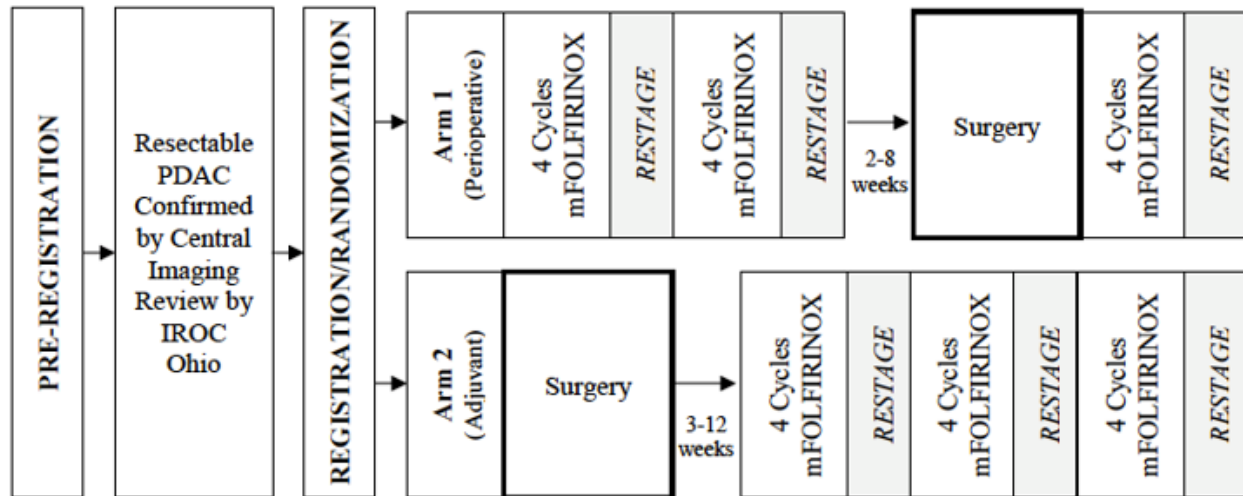


# Clinical Trials Update

## Newly Opened Cancer Clinical Trials

### PANCREATIC ADENOCARCINOMA – 1<sup>st</sup> Line Resectable

**NCI A021806:** *A phase III trial of perioperative versus adjuvant chemotherapy for resectable pancreatic cancer*



## Announcements



Mary Ellen Migre,  
RN, CCRP

Please join us in congratulating **Mary Ellen Migre, RN, CCRP** as the newest Oncology Certified Nurse at Boston Medical Center. After months of preparation and studying, all of her hard work paid off when she passed the national exam on December 7, 2020! Congratulations Mary Ellen!

## Cancer Clinical Trials Lists - December 2020

Due to the ongoing pandemic, CHCRP will not be mailing out hard copies of the Cancer Clinical Trials Brochure again this month. However, the information on the website is current and each protocol has a direct link to the ClinicalTrials.gov information. Please continue to refer potentially eligible patients. Our treatment and most non-treatment trials remain active. Please email Annie Jose (Annie.Jose@bmc.org) with any questions.

Website: <http://www.bumc.bu.edu/clinicaltrials/>

# Announcements

## Volunteering for Anti-Racism Steering Committee

We are excited that we have had several people already volunteer to participate in our anti-racism steering committee, which has been tasked with delineating the next steps we can take as a section to address systemic racism. Racism affects us all, and as we undertake this important effort our goal is to have representation from multiple groups and viewpoints within Cancer Care. In particular, we hope to include nurses, ASRs, MAs and members of our Pharmacy. If you are interested and willing, please consider volunteering to join the steering committee by emailing Ashray Mohan (ashray.mohan@bmc.org). The next meeting for the committee will be held in January, 2021. We are very excited about the ideas that have been put forward thus far and are eager to start work on them!

## Call for Faculty Volunteers: Specific Aims Reviewers

The Department of Medicine's First Step to Peer-Reviewed Funding initiative is seeking faculty volunteers to join a panel of potential Specific Aims reviewers.

The goal of the First Step to Peer-Reviewed Funding Initiative is to provide help in grant writing through an internal review program. In order to spread the substantial expertise that exists across the Department of Medicine we are encouraging faculty that have been successful in securing sponsored funding or have participated in the Federal peer-review process to volunteer as a potential reviewer. We have a growing list of volunteers and the chances are that we will call on you infrequently (once or twice annually).

If you are interested in serving as a DOM Specific Aims reviewer, please email Rachelle Joseph at [rajoseph@bu.edu](mailto:rajoseph@bu.edu) with the following information:

- Name
- Section
- Area of scientific expertise

## Available Career Opportunities as of December 2020:

- [Clinical Investigator, Hematology/Hematologic Malignancies](#)
- [Senior Grants Administrator](#)
- [Research Nurse](#)
- [Clinical Research Financial Manager](#)