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GASTRIC CANCER FOUNDATION

December 2019

FUND OF THE V FOUNDATION FOR CANCER RESEARCH

A Special Message from Our Board Chair



We are getting ready to wrap up 2019 - a big year for the Gastric Cancer Foundation. In November, we celebrated an important milestone - our 10th Anniversary - at the beautiful **A CAUSE FOR HOPE** event. It was a wonderful opportunity to take stock of our achievements and prepare for the future!

I am proud to report that the Gastric Cancer Foundation has granted over \$2.3 million for gastric cancer research. **The Gastric Cancer Registry** has grown as an important HIPAA-compliant repository of patient information and genomic samples, and the introduction of an open-source web portal in 2020 will increase its impact even further. We have already partnered with researchers at Stanford, the University of Michigan, Washington University in St. Louis, and MD Anderson Cancer Institute. **Our research scholar awards** enable young investigators to conduct important studies, and we are gratified that our first two scholars have received significant federal grants to carry forward their work.

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We also work to provide information and support to people who are touched by the disease. **Our website**, **"Gesundheit Kitchen" nutrition videos series**, **free clinical trial navigator service**, and **online patient and caregiver community** all provide resources and connections so no one needs to face the journey alone.

Thank you for your involvement and support. Your generosity makes everything possible. As we turn the calendar to a new year, I hope you will again join us in this important work. Together, we will defeat gastric cancer.

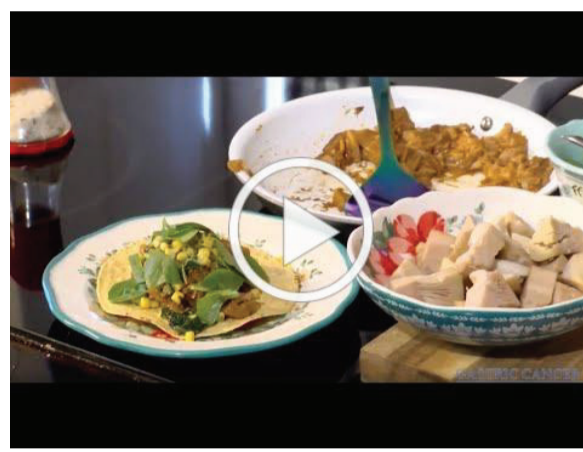
Best wishes for the holiday season and a healthy, happy 2020!

Paul Gottsegen, Board Chair

Make a Donation Today

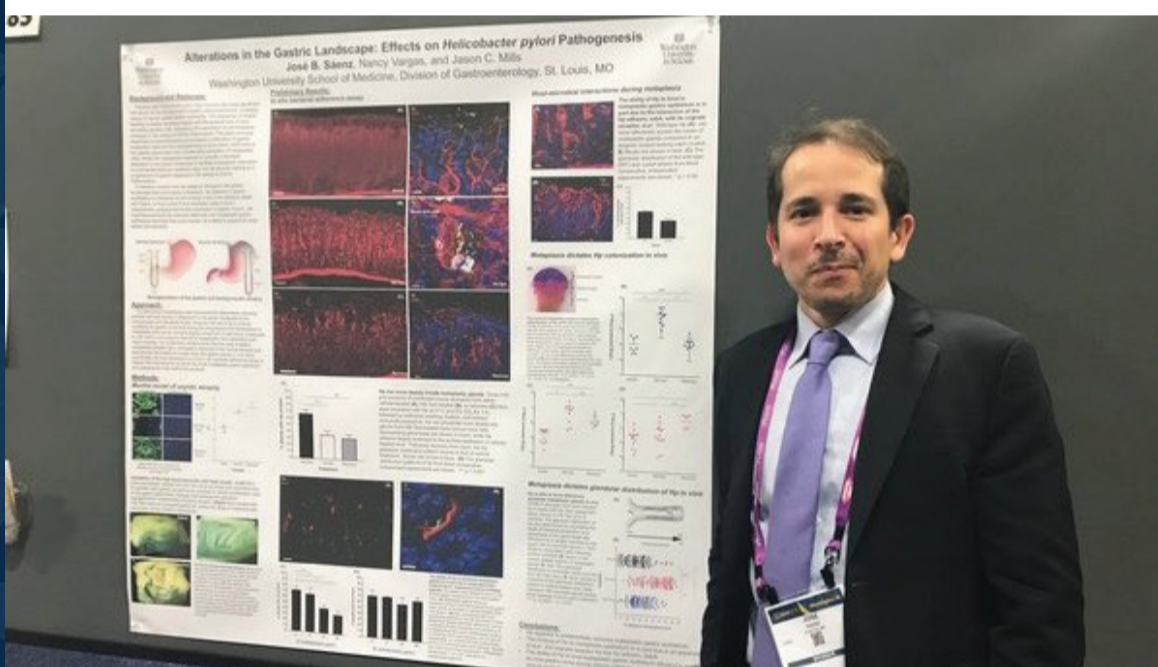
New from the Gesundheit Kitchen: Fall in Love with Jackfruit

Foundation board member and "Chef without a Stomach" **Hans Rueffert** shares eating tips and support with the help of a little known food - the jackfruit. Hans encourages us to not shy away from its strange exterior. Take advantage of this versatile fruit whose texture has become a vegan meat staple - like a delicious "pulled pork BBQ" style tostada. Special thanks to Merck & Company, Inc. for supporting this video series through an educational grant. Find more episodes at the **Gesundheit Kitchen** on gastriccancer.org.



Watch the Video

Foundation-Funded Research Scholar Receives NIH Grant to Continue Research



Jose Saenz, the 2017 recipient of the **AGA-Gastric Cancer Foundation Ben Feinstein Memorial Research Scholar Award in Gastric Cancer**, has taken a major step forward in his efforts to unravel the mysteries of the *Helicobacter pylori* (*H. pylori*) bacterium, a huge risk factor for developing stomach cancer.

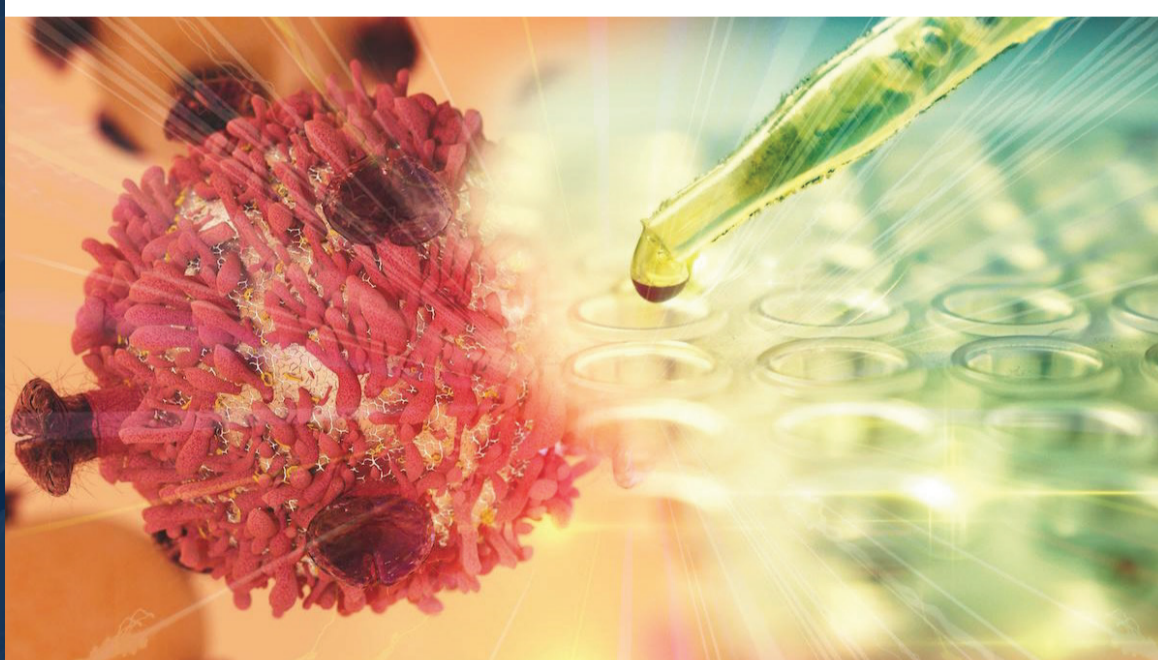
In September, Saenz was awarded a five-year grant from the National Institutes of Health to fund his *H. pylori* research. The grant, worth \$159,558 the first year alone, will allow him to build upon recent insights he has gained into how the bacterium spreads and survives in the stomach.

"This will really help me fund a critical period as a physician-scientist transitioning out of a training environment and building towards independence," says Saenz, an instructor in the division of gastroenterology at Washington University School of Medicine. The five years of funding will allow Saenz to extend his research beyond the conclusion of GCF's three-year grant, which he believes will set him up for even bigger research grants in the future.

GCF's funding supported two key research publications over the past year that were led by Saenz, including a paper in the journal *Gastroenterology*. The study explained how *H. pylori* exploits changes in the stomach environment, such as a decrease in acid, to expand its colonization of the organ.

Read More

Research Roundup



There has been a lot of exciting news in gastric cancer research. Here are a few of the latest highlights:

A study found that patients who undergo minimally invasive laparoscopic gastrectomy to treat locally advanced gastric cancer are better able to tolerate chemotherapy than are those who have more invasive surgeries. They also have lower rates of post-surgery complications.

A new analysis shows that patients with gastric cancer that's characterized and treated as microsatellite instability high (MSI-high) have favorable five-year survival rates. Patients who are MSI-low benefit from a combination of chemotherapy and surgery.

Leap Therapeutics announced that a combination of its experimental drug DKN-01 and Merck's Keytruda produced a 50% overall response rate in patients with advanced gastric cancer. The drug is an antibody that works by inhibiting Dickkopf-1 (DKK1), which is over-expressed in some gastric tumors.

More Research News

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