

IMPACT REPORT

Accelerating
Research

Empowering
Patients

Raising
Awareness



We are a results-driven national nonprofit dedicated to improving the lives of people affected by gastric cancer and working with leading researchers to find a cure.

The Gastric Cancer Foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization (EIN# 27-2978173).



Gastric Cancer Foundation grew out of one brave patient's personal journey. When our founder, JP Gallagher, was diagnosed with gastric cancer in 2007, JP's difficult experience – and his recognition of a need for information and encouragement for all stomach cancer patients – became the seed of an idea that grew into the Gastric Cancer Foundation.



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A letter from Gastric Cancer Foundation Board Chair, Paul Gottsegen

We are proud and excited to share this Gastric Cancer Foundation Impact Report with you, our supporters.

Our commitment to a cure endures, 15 years after gastric cancer patient JP Gallagher founded GCF with the goal of boosting funding for critical research, while at the same time supporting patients with vital information to help them understand and cope with the disease. With your generosity, we have made tremendous gains in achieving these goals.

In this report, you'll learn more about those achievements. We are helping fill the funding gap for early-stage research, providing grants to dedicated scientists who are now advancing novel treatments for gastric cancer. We have supported patients with videos on diet and nutrition, clinical trial matching, an online patient community and more. We look forward to building on this strong base as we strengthen our commitment to a cure.

We are so grateful for our ongoing partnership with donors, scientific innovators, and gastric cancer physicians and researchers. Working together, I know we will realize JP's dream - and turn hope into new cures for gastric cancer patients.



Accelerating Innovation with the Gastric Cancer Registry

An Essential Resource for Progress

GCF launched the Gastric Cancer Registry in partnership with the Stanford University School of Medicine in 2011, with the goal of building the world's largest and most diverse database focused on stomach cancer. Under the direction of Hanlee Ji, MD, associate professor of medicine, the registry is collecting and genomically sequencing tumor samples from participating patients, along with detailed data about their lifestyle, health, environmental exposures and family histories. It also collects biological samples and information from first-degree relatives of gastric cancer patients – making it the most comprehensive clinical database for facilitating research aimed at better understanding the disease and finding new cures.

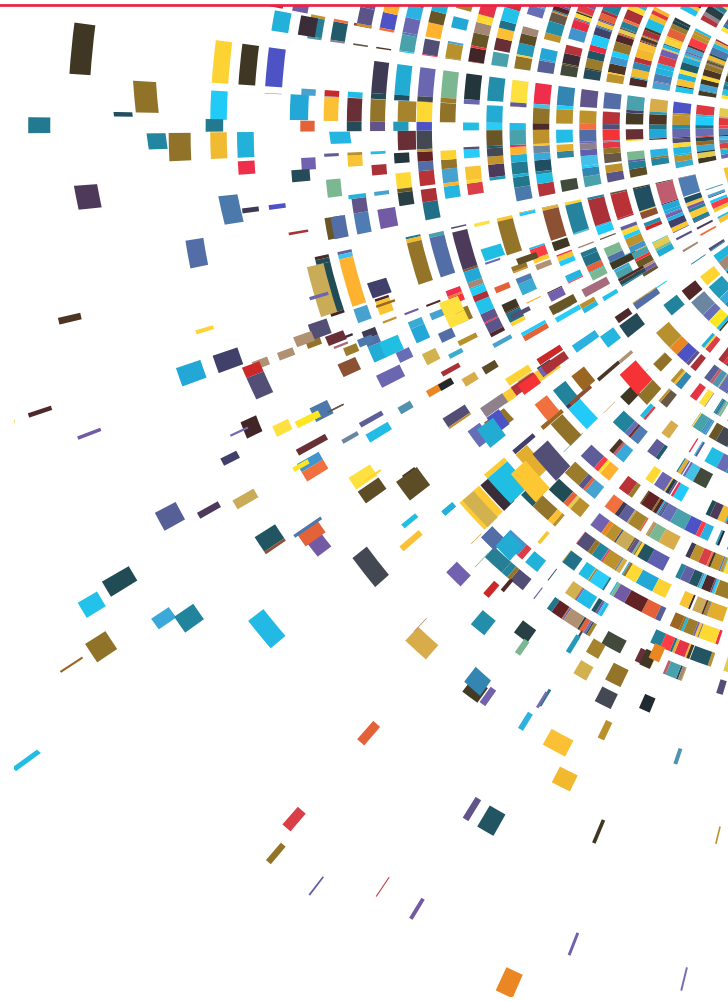
In addition to recruiting individual participants via the registry website, Ji and his team have formed several partnerships with medical centers around the world that have contributed samples to the registry. Partners include Intermountain Healthcare and the Guatemala Integra Cancer Institute. Total registry enrollment is now at nearly 900.

A team led by Hanlee Ji received a five-year, \$9 million grant from the National Cancer Institute in 2023. The funded project is aimed at identifying markers and cell types in intestinal precancers that may help identify people who face a high risk of progressing to gastric cancer. The project was born from an analysis of Gastric Cancer Registry samples.

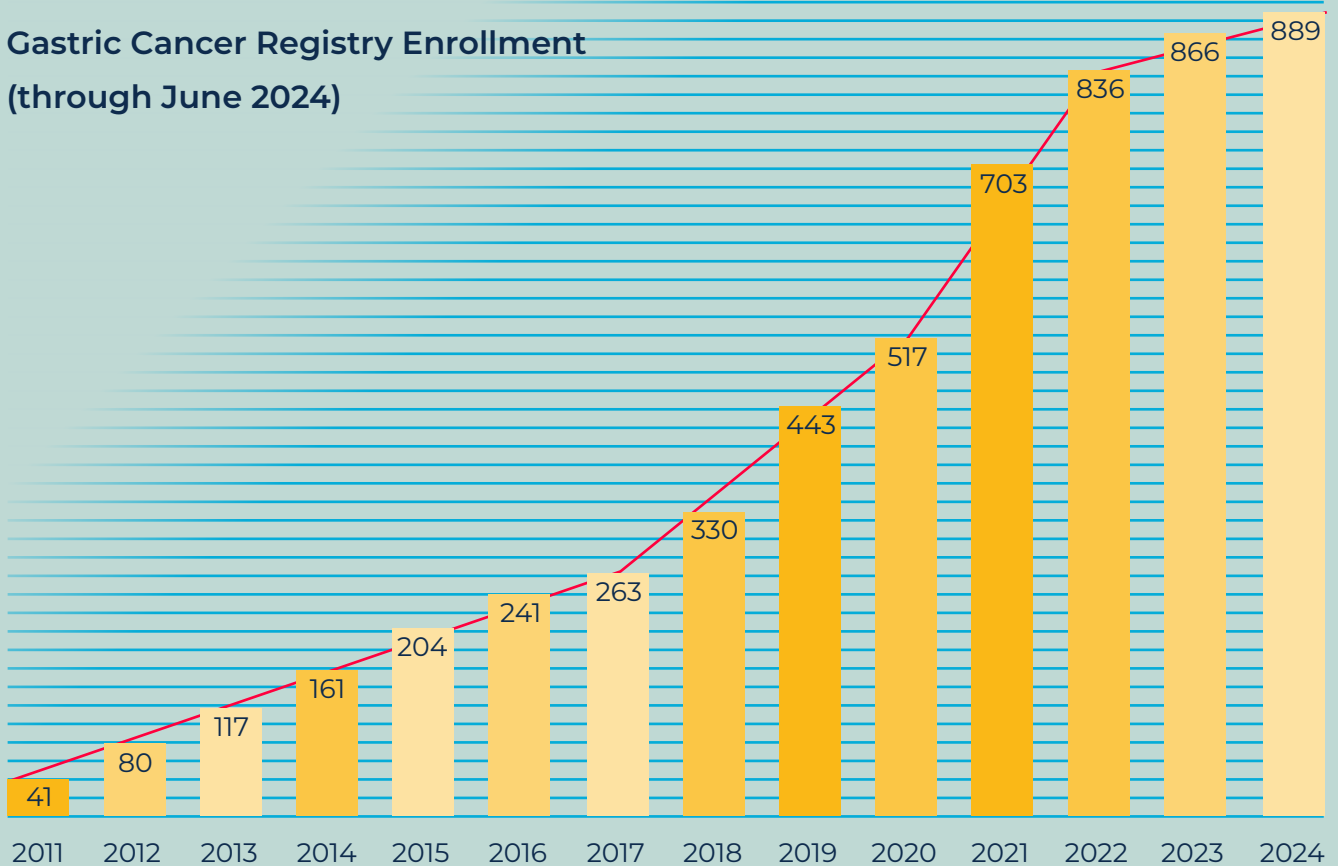


Open Access to Data

In 2020, the registry launched the Genome Explorer, a HIPAA-compliant web portal that houses clinical and genomic datasets derived from the registry. This tool – provided free of charge to oncology researchers – is designed to facilitate sophisticated genomic analyses and the mapping of associations between genetic mutations and patients' clinical experiences. It provides data on copy number changes, gene expression changes, neoantigens and chromosomal aberrations.



Gastric Cancer Registry Enrollment (through June 2024)



Accelerating Innovation with the Gastric Cancer Registry

In 2024, the registry team began adding spatial analysis data, creating two-dimensional models of tumor samples that researchers can use as they search for new therapies.

So far, Ji and his colleagues have published more than a half-dozen scientific publications enabled by data from the Gastric Cancer Registry. Insights derived from Registry samples are inspiring plans for clinical trials of novel therapies.

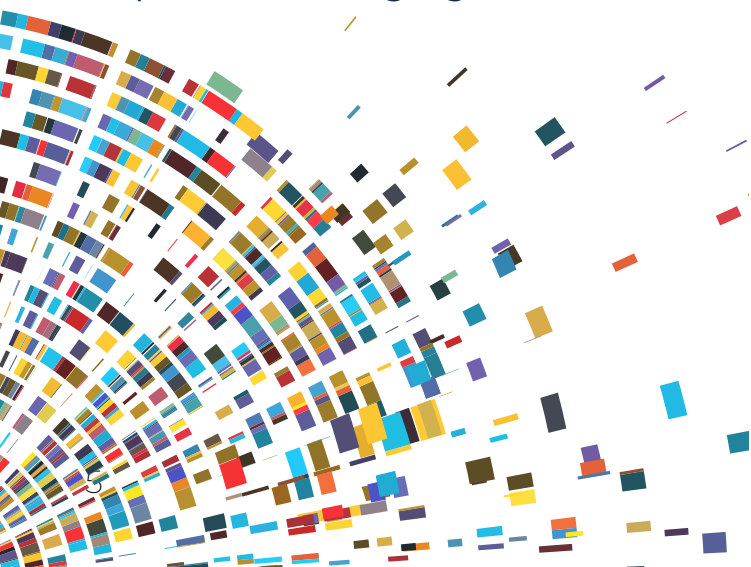
For example, the team tested samples in the registry for expression of TIGIT, an emerging immunotherapy target. They studied TIGIT in specific cell types, including microsatellite instable and microsatellite stable subtypes that are typically more difficult to treat. Using a powerful imaging tool called

multiplex immunofluorescence and bulk RNA sequencing data, they determined that targeting TIGIT could alter the properties of gastric tumors and make them more treatable with immunotherapy.

Ji hopes to use these insights to plan a clinical trial exploiting candidate immunotherapy targets like TIGIT in gastric cancer.

“The early publications that were supported by the foundation showed the potential for the registry to enable collaborative research. We’re all working together to identify new therapeutic targets, and I’m optimistic we will see successes from those efforts.”

Hanlee Ji, MD
Stanford University



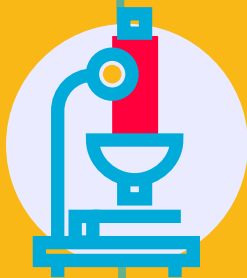
Gastric Cancer Registry Enables New Research

All researchers can now access powerful data to fuel research into new cures.



Biospecimen Collection

Participants agree to donate tissue samples from past surgeries, blood or saliva for genomic sequencing.



Cutting-Edge Lab Technologies

The registry team uses whole genome sequencing and other advanced technologies to identify tumor mutations and other biomarkers.

Shared Data through Genome Explorer

The registry team is collecting data from biological samples in the online Genome Explorer, the first comprehensive gastric cancer database, which is free to access.



From the day the Gastric Cancer Foundation began with the goal of helping patients by supporting research, we have focused on filling critical gaps in research funding.



Funding Investigators in Search of Cures

Research Scholar Awards

Early-career researchers struggle to obtain the funding they need to focus on this area of cancer research. The Gastric Cancer Foundation is dedicated to supporting young investigators and their novel approaches to battling gastric cancer.

Toward that end, the Gastric Cancer Foundation partners with the American Gastroenterological Association to support the Ben Feinstein Memorial Research Scholar Award in Gastric Cancer. Since 2014, four young researchers have received these three-year

grants of \$100,000 per year. With our support, Research Scholars have published more than a dozen scientific studies in a wide range of prestigious publications, including Clinical Cancer Research, Cancer Discovery, Gastroenterology, Frontiers in Immunology and JCI Insight. These impressive research portfolios are positioning them to receive larger grants that will propel their development of better diagnostics, treatments and cures for gastric cancer:

Funding Investigators in Search of Cures

Magnifying the Impact of Early Funding

2014-2016

Mohamad El-Zaatari, PhD
University of Michigan

Received a \$558,000 three-year **grant** from the U.S. Department of Defense to continue his investigation into the role of B cells in the development of gastric cancer.



“This grant has enhanced my focus on gastric carcinogenesis as a central topic in my career. It also provided extremely critical funding during a very vulnerable stage of my career.”

Mohamad El-Zaatari
Research Scholar Award recipient

2017-2019

Jose Saenz, MD, PhD
Washington University School of Medicine

Received the National Institute of Health’s National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases Mentored Clinical Scientist Research Career Development Award, a five-year grant that provided him up to \$125,000 per year to continue his research into the pathogenesis of H. pylori in the development of gastric cancer.



2020-2022

Samuel J. Klempner, MD
Harvard Medical School and
Massachusetts General Hospital

Received a Footbridge **Bridge Project Grant** from the Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research at MIT, worth \$200,000 per team with the potential for additional funding, to expand his research into gastric ascites and peritoneal-directed therapies.



“What’s unique about [this] award is the organizations’ willingness to support high-risk projects. This grant was absolutely foundational for us for taking our research from an idea to something that has spawned several new research collaborations.”

Samuel J. Klempner
Research Scholar Award recipient

2023-2025

Martina Molgora, PhD
Moffitt Cancer Center

As she enters the final year of her award, Dr. Molgora will be seeking funding to continue her work on the impact of TREM2 in gastric cancer. She co-authored a study published in Science Immunology showing a link between a deficiency of the protein TREM2 and an enhanced response to anti-PD-1 immunotherapy in tumors.



Seed Grants for Promising Studies

In 2019, the Foundation doubled down on its commitment to supporting early-stage research through an annual seed grant program. Every year, gastric cancer researchers are invited to submit proposals for novel projects aimed at discovering new diagnostics and therapies. After a scientific review by a panel of independent stomach cancer experts, we award one-year grants of up to \$100,000. GCF has awarded seed grants totaling \$1,743,622 so far.

The accomplishments of GCF-supported researchers are helping them build strong foundations to continue

their important research. For example, 2021 seed grant recipient Nina Salama, PhD, of Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, received a two-year, \$447,236 grant from the National Institutes of Health to continue her investigation of the role of *H. pylori* and *F. nucleatum* bacteria in gastric cancer development. And 2022 grant recipient Eunyoung Choi, PhD, of Vanderbilt University, is leveraging the experience she gained studying cellular models of gastric precancers as part of a research team that has won a \$2.5 million grant from the Department of Defense to test two potential treatments for destroying precancerous stomach cells.

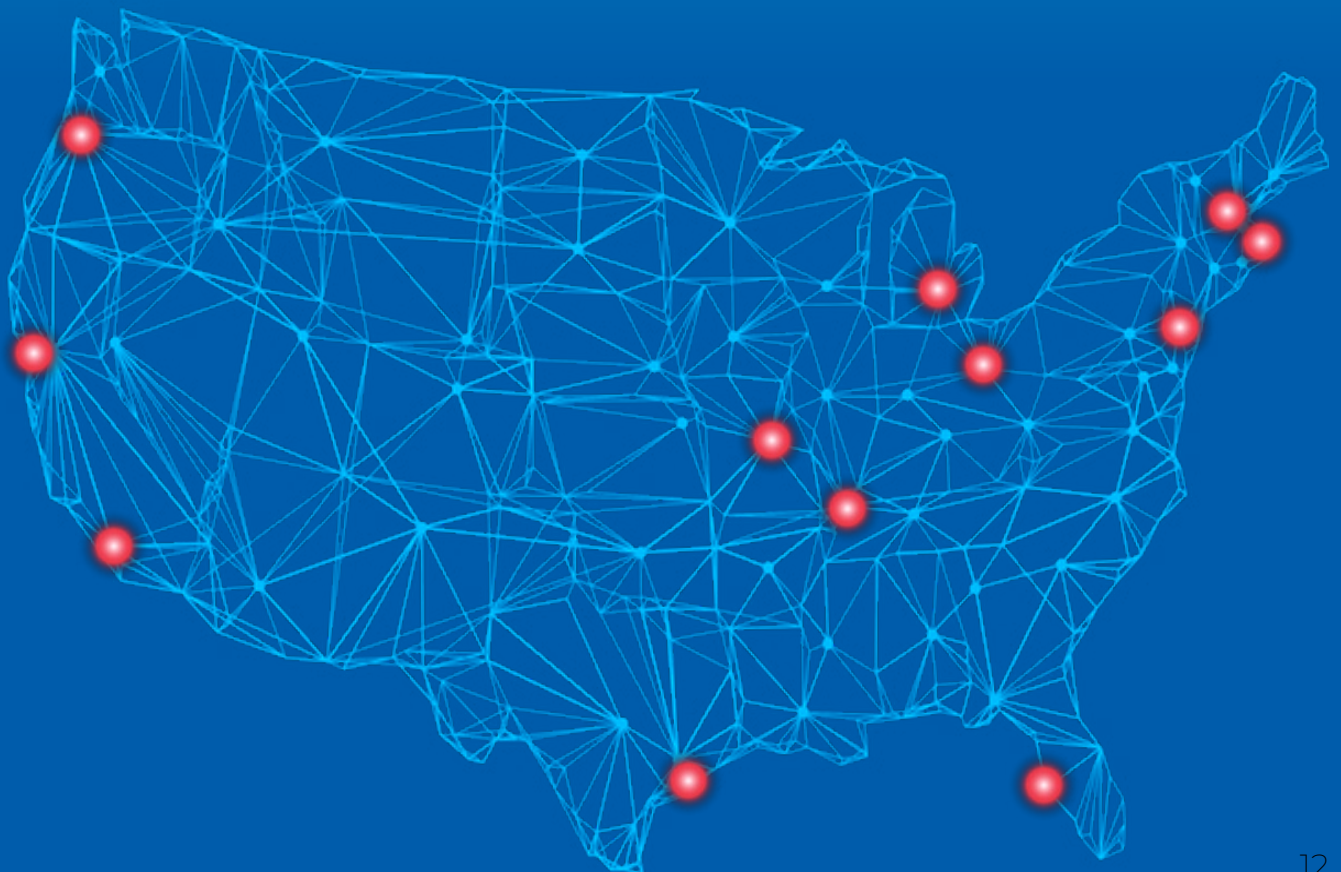




“This grant really helped me to jump start a new direction in my lab that included deepening our analysis of *H. pylori* driven gastric cancer progression. This early funding helped us get an NIH R21 grant.”

Nina Salama, PhD
Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center
2021 research grant recipient

\$4.1 million granted to expand research studies across the U.S.



Empowering Patients with Information and Support



An important part of our mission to support patients is to provide a community of medical experts and, importantly, fellow patients.



Online Community

We offer a secure peer-to-peer support community in partnership with Smart Patients. It provides discussion groups on a wide variety of topics, “Ask the Expert” sessions, and a place for patients to draw information and support from other patients. Since launching this collaboration in 2018, followers have grown to over 1,000.

Gastriccancer.org

The foundation website provides a comprehensive resource of information about the disease and how to live with the after-effects of treatment and surgery. It is an easily navigated portal to a wealth of help and hope. Website traffic grew significantly in 2024 - with over 58,000 page views and over 15,000 unique users.

Patient Education Webinars

Since January 2022, the Gastric Cancer Foundation has partnered with CancerCare to present **educational webinars** for patients that feature gastric cancer practitioners discussing topics ranging from the latest treatment approaches to symptom management. More than 880 participants from 18 countries have participated so far, with many reporting huge gains in their understanding of the disease. For example, after our June 2023 webinar, 77% of participants said they had greater confidence in their ability to work with their health care team to manage their treatments.

“It’s always good to be armed with information and medical professionals, but it’s immeasurable to be armed with support.”

Participant





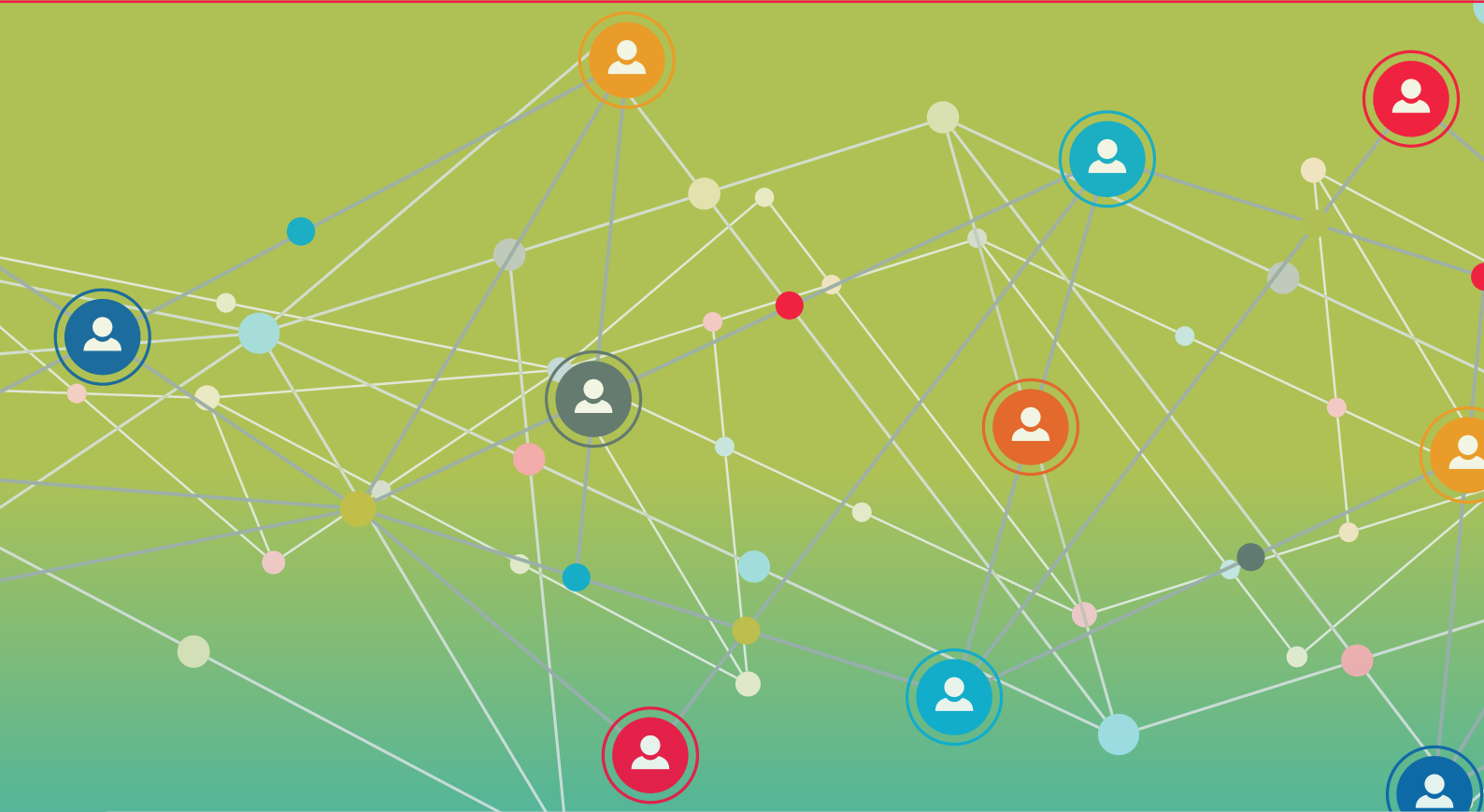
Nutrition Video Series

“Gesundheit Kitchen” is hosted by GCF board member and “Chef without a Stomach” Hans Rueffert, who brings his own experience as a gastric cancer survivor to his entertaining and informative videos. With more than 50 videos in the series so far, Hans offers everything from recipes to nutrition tips from a registered dietician, along with a serving of understanding and encouragement. Patients are treated to step-by-step instructions on meal preparation, tips on traveling and eating out, and a full library of downloadable recipes.

“Hans sharing his personal experiences and also giving tips and tricks on things like eating out give hope to patients on topics that can be extremely difficult to navigate after you have had stomach cancer.”

Gesundheit Kitchen Viewer





New Video Series in 2024!

Gastric Cancer Foundation presents

Your New Normal

Navigating Life with Gastric Cancer

Gastric cancer has a profound impact on virtually every aspect of a person's life, including emotional well-being, relationships, work, finances and overall quality of life. This new video series features conversations with patients, caregivers and healthcare professionals who offer their expertise and perspectives on concerns that are often difficult to discuss. We aim to support patients with practical guidance, emotional support and strategies to navigate their gastric cancer journey.

Clinical Trial Finder

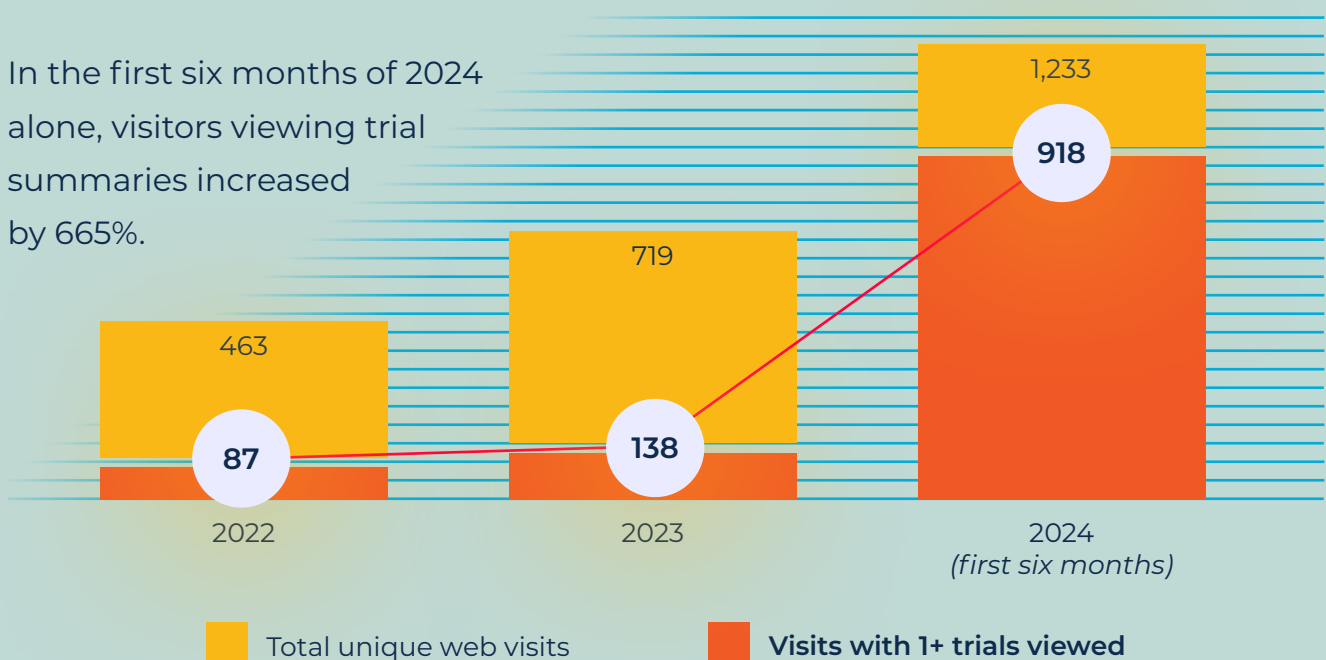
The Gastric Cancer Foundation simplifies the task of connecting patients with clinical trials through our partnership with Carebox Healthcare Solutions. Our free clinical trial navigator allows patients to search for clinical trials online and to connect to skilled navigators who can help match them to the most appropriate trials for their particular disease.

In 2024, we updated the Clinical Trial Finder with a new web offering that makes it even easier to find trials. With the help of artificial intelligence, Carebox is converting the unstructured text regarding eligibility criteria at ClinicalTrials.gov into a searchable index that facilitates easy matching with patient characteristics. GCF's improved web interface includes an embedded widget that allows patients to request a phone or email appointment with a live clinical trial navigator without even having to leave the website.

Growth in Clinical Trial Finder Utilization

January 2022 - June 2024

In the first six months of 2024 alone, visitors viewing trial summaries increased by 665%.



Test Your Biomarkers Campaign

The Gastric Cancer Foundation is a founding supporter of the national Test Your Biomarkers education and awareness campaign which aims to ensure that all patients understand the importance of biomarker testing early in diagnosis to guide personalized treatment for stomach cancer.



We joined with a broad alliance of advocacy organizations, pharmaceutical companies, patients, oncologists and researchers to reach the largest possible audience with this critical information. With our support, the first phase of the campaign reached 1.7 million people across social media platforms.



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