

SUMMER 2021 Volume 24 | Issue 3

# Impact

Dana-Farber.org and JimmyFund.org  
DefyCancer.org

THANKING THOSE WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The  
Dana-Farber  
Campaign

Defy Cancer



**Dana-Farber**  
Cancer Institute



**The**  
**Jimmy Fund**®

## Critical investment advances uterine cancer research



**A**s part of Dana-Farber's ambitious new campaign, the Lewin Fund to Fight Women's Cancers made a generous \$100,000 gift to support uterine serous carcinoma (USC) research under the direction of Joyce Liu, MD, MPH, building on the Fund's earlier \$50,000 gift to support research by Panos Konstantinopoulos, MD, PhD. Both gifts were made in memory of Mary Lou Ashford.

This hard-to-treat subtype accounts for about 10% of uterine cancers but up to 40% of deaths from the disease. "Even though uterine cancer is the most common gynecologic cancer in the United States, with rising cases annually, it is very underfunded," said Sharyn Lewin, MD, president and executive director of the Lewin Fund. "This new grant reflects our ongoing commitment to Dana-Farber's critical gynecologic cancer research."

Leveraging the Lewin Fund's most recent gift, Liu aims to better understand how defects in cellular DNA repair mechanisms could be exploited to sensitize cancer cells to treatment. Liu is currently leading a clinical trial of a drug called a WEE1 inhibitor, which helps trigger increased levels of DNA damage in cells, resulting in death of the cancer cells in patients with USC. As part of this effort, Liu and her team are also studying patient samples from the trial, as well as conducting simultaneous explorations in research models, to try and pinpoint biomarkers that could predict how USC cells might respond to WEE1.

"I am deeply grateful for the Lewin Fund's powerful investment in our efforts to improve outcomes for patients with uterine serous carcinoma, which has the potential to provide new hope to those facing this devastating cancer," said Liu, associate chief and director of clinical research of the Division of Gynecologic Oncology. ■

**"This new grant reflects our ongoing commitment to Dana-Farber's critical gynecologic cancer research."**

**— SHARYN LEWIN, MD,  
president and executive director, The Lewin Fund**