

THE CONCERN FOUNDATION EFFECT

Making a real difference in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer.

Amander Clark, Ph.D.

UCLA Eli and Edythe Broad Center of Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research

Conquering Germ Cell Tumors in Children and Young Adults

Among the Broad Stem Cell Center's first recruits to UCLA nearly 10 years ago, Dr. Clark has a deep knowledge of stem cell biology and early human development. And now, with funding from Concern, she is working with pediatric clinical fellow, Joanna Gell, MD, to ensure her work can one day be applied to the treatment of pediatric germ cell cancers.

I am very grateful for the contribution from the Concern Foundation, which has enabled me to explore how germ cell tumors develop. It has also provided me with the opportunity to collaborate with a talented UCLA Hematology Oncology fellow, Dr. Joanna Gell, who sees adolescent and young adult germ cell tumor patients in her clinic.

Together and with Concern's support we have identified a new tumor marker that we believe may be the cause of germ cell tumors. With this understanding, we will be better positioned to develop new and more effective therapies. Thank you Concern!

Damien Reynaud, Ph.D.

Cincinnati Children's Hospital, Cincinnati Ohio

Systemic metabolic disorders and leukemic clonal dominance

Dr. Damien Reynaud research focuses on a link between obesity as a significant risk factor for blood cancers. Obese individuals have a much higher risk of spontaneously developing leukemia and they are also more difficult to treat, yet little is known about the molecular mechanisms linking obesity and leukemia. We do know the impacts of obesity include added stress on the whole body, which can cause drastic effects like accelerated aging of cells. Since stem cells don't regenerate, exposure to the stresses of an obese environment forces them to work much harder to adapt and maintain themselves.

"I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Concern Foundation and its donors for their support. Seed funds from the Concern Foundation received in 2014 have been essential in establishing my laboratory and initiating an original research program that focuses on the molecular mechanisms linking obesity and blood cancer. Our findings on this project are extremely promising and an abstract featuring our results has been accepted for presentation at the annual meeting of the American Society of Hematology, a key international event dedicated to the treatment of blood diseases. I am grateful that the support of the Concern Foundation has allowed us to create a firm foundation for this exciting project."

Anat Erdreich-Epstein, MD, Ph.D.

Children's Hospital Los Angeles

A gene that improves brain tumor response to therapy

The Children's Center for Cancer and Blood Diseases remains ever grateful for the Concern Foundation's generous support of the research we conduct and the children and families we serve. It is only through partnerships with philanthropic organizations like Concern that we can achieve our mission to discover cures for devastating pediatric brain tumors while serving the needs of our patients. Our work on PID1 has been generously supported for the past two years through funds from the Concern Foundation.

"The work supported by the Concern Foundation has prompted interactions with two groups of brain tumor researchers from separate institutions, who have access to independent and non-overlapping expression microarray databases of tumors and survival data from patients with medulloblastoma and gliomas. As a result, these investigators are now collaborating with us on this project. They have contributed important clinical correlations to our first manuscript"

Lili Yang, Ph.D.

University of California, Los Angeles

Stem Cell-Engineered Invariant Natural Killer T Cells for Cancer Immunotherapy

Lili Yang, PhD, was recruited to the UCLA Broad Stem Cell Research Center from Caltech in January 2013. Concern Foundation and one of its community partners, Save the Ta-tas Foundation, provided the much needed resources for Dr. Yang to initiate a project that will establish stem cell-engineered natural killer T cell therapy for cancer.

Dr. Yang's project is developing a novel model system to genetically program human blood stem cells to become iNKT cells. With this knowledge, Dr. Yang and colleagues hope to provide a roadmap for future therapies designed to increase the number of iNKT cells in the blood, creating more "special forces" cells and increasing the body's ability to fight off cancer.

Dr. Yang's research has made incredible strides at a remarkable pace. As a result of her work funded by Concern, she is a recent recipient of the prestigious \$2.3 million NIH Director's New Innovator Award.

"I received the Conquer Cancer Now award in 2012 and was fortunate enough I receive a second year of funding to support my research into the chemical modification of proteins in cancer cells. It is extremely challenging for new investigators to obtain funding and this task has become even more difficult with the current federal funding environment. Therefore, the support from the Concern Foundation was crucial to my success allowing me to purchase reagents and more importantly support two graduate students who represent the next generation of scientific discovery".

Matthew Pratt, Assistant Professor

Departments of Chemistry and Molecular and Computational Biology

University of Southern California

Specifically, the Concern Foundation Conquer Cancer Now award allow us to study the modification of proteins by a small carbohydrate, termed O-GlcNAc modification (O-GlcNAcylation). O-GlcNAcylation is dramatically increased in several types of cancer and this increase is required for tumor formation. However, the specific roles of increased O-GlcNAcylation in cancer and exactly why O-GlcNAc modification are increased is still mysterious. We have generated significant data which show that changes in metabolism that are a fundamental hallmark of most cancers directly contribute to increased O-GlcNAcylation.

"We hypothesize that understanding and inhibiting this link between metabolism and O-GlcNAc modification will open up new avenues for cancer therapies. Using the data that would have been impossible to collect without the Concern Foundation Conquer Cancer Now award, we are seeking funding to continue our research".

Heather Christofk

Assistant Professor, Molecular and Medical Pharmacology

Member of the UCLA Broad Stem Cell Research Center

I am extremely grateful to the Concern Foundation/Cancer Immunology Research Foundation for supporting my research on cancer metabolism. My lab studies the metabolic differences between normal cells and cancer cells and is increasingly reliant on sophisticated new technologies to measure metabolites called metabolomics. Funds from the Concern Foundation have helped me to advance metabolomics technologies at UCLA – technologies which benefit my lab as well as the entire campus community. Preliminary data generated with the Concern Foundation support have helped us acquire a grant from the NIH to purchase a state-of-the-art mass spectrometer for metabolomics measurements. With this new instrument, we have established a UCLA Metabolomics Center and are currently deciphering differences in nutrient requirements and metabolic pathway usage in normal versus cancerous cells and tissues.

Defining the unique metabolic properties of cancer cells through metabolomics will enable us to improve diagnostic and treatment strategies for cancer patients.

Thank you for providing a crucial stepping stone for my cancer research program.

Steven Bensinger VMD, PhD Assistant Professor

Institute for Molecular Medicine

Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine

University of California, Los Angeles

I wish to express my sincere gratitude for the support of the Concern Foundation in our research on glioma. Your foundation provided much needed funding for a project that was outside our area of expertise and saw the potential in our ideas. I did not have formal training in cancer and knew that without a proven “track record” in the field, generating funding for our proposal was going to be difficult. Your foundation provided critical resources to our fledgling laboratory, affording us the opportunity to test our hypothesis and generate significant data that advance our understanding of glioma pathogenesis. We are very excited about our findings and are all the more committed to research in the field of brain cancer. Moreover, we believe that the data generated with the support of the Concern foundation has the potential to translate into novel therapeutic approaches. Please keep up the outstanding work.

Andrea Dorfleutner, Ph.D.

Northwestern University, Chicago, IL

I am the recipient of the Concern Conquer Cancer Now award in 2010 and fortunately I was able to receive a second year of funding for my research project, which put me in the position to generate enough preliminary data for submitting a major NIH grant. Since it is extremely difficult for new investigators to obtain initial funding, the support from the Conquer Cancer Now award came at a critical time. Thanks to the Foundation's Conquer Cancer Now award I was able to purchase critical research reagents, generate unique research tools for my project and receive some help in the lab from a technician, which made a huge impact on my progress.

Yong-Mi Kim, Ph.D., M.D., M.P.H.

Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA

I am very appreciative of the Research Award given to me by the Concern Foundation, which has been of incredible help to develop my work on understanding drug resistant acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL). Therapeutic approaches for childhood acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) have improved greatly, however drug resistance and relapse of leukemia remains a major problem. The cure rate of adult ALL is markedly worse. The underlying mechanisms responsible for drug resistance and relapse of leukemia are only poorly understood. New therapeutic insights are likely to come from a greater understanding of the biology of relapse leukemia. Our continuing objective is to understand the mechanism of drug resistance in ALL and how to overcome it by developing novel treatment approaches. In this effort, we were able to identify survivin as a critical molecular determinant in drug resistance of leukemia. Funding opportunities for both experienced and younger researchers in the US have been compromised due to tight economic situation in the US. I sincerely appreciate the generosity of the Concern Foundation supporting my research at this critical stage. This grant allowed me to develop not only the current project, but also helped me to get enough data to publish our work and to prepare other grant applications.

Richard Maser, Ph.D.

The Jackson Laboratory, Bar Harbor, Maine

I'm very grateful for the support of the Concern Foundation over the past two years. Funding has become very difficult to secure, and it is especially hard for young investigators to establish a track record to become competitive for Federal grants from the NIH. The Concern Foundation's support has been crucial in allowing us to develop

several complex mouse models that investigate how failure of telomeres in the bone marrow might promote aberrant myeloid cell development, and to test the role of telomere dysfunction in acute myeloid leukemia (AML). The data we are generating will serve as the basis for our future efforts on understanding the genetics of AML. Of equal importance, it has allowed us to pursue unexpected results that have come up during our studies. For example, we are using one particular mouse model that expresses a human AML-derived oncogene, and surprisingly we have found that these mice develop skin tumors, providing the first direct evidence that this particular oncogene may play a wider role in human cancers beyond its function in leukemia. We wouldn't have made these findings without the support of the Concern Foundation.

Eva González Suárez, Ph.D.

Bellvitge Institute for Biomedical Research, Barcelona Spain

It is an honor to be funded by the Concern Foundation, particularly considering that I am a young investigator starting my independent career in Spain. I am very grateful to the Concern Foundation for extending its support to researchers working outside the US. Advances in cancer research may come from laboratories localized in different countries. The more investigators working in the field, the more we can advance our fight against cancer.

The transition from the bench to the office is always a difficult one. Being a principal investigator is a multitasking job with several responsibilities including getting competitive funding. Although the situation for young investigators in Spain has improved in recent years, it is particularly difficult to get funds to hire personal, including postdoctoral scientists, technicians, and even PhD students. Research is a team work and a good PI cannot succeed without a qualified team. The other challenge is the limited number of sources for funding available in Spain. The government only funds one project (equivalent to the NIH grants) independently of how successful the group may be. In addition, very few private foundations offer competitive grants and the funds granted by these are extremely low. The situation is even harder for young investigators, making more challenging the transition to independence and consolidation. For this reason, the support I received from the Concern Foundation has been of enormous value; it has allowed hiring a postdoctoral scientist and getting important materials for the laboratory.

"We are a young group, committed to our line of research, and we believe we can contribute to increasing the current knowledge in breast cancer and impact the clinical practice. It is rewarding to feel that an organization such as Concern Foundation, trusts our project and supports our research".

Manel Camps, D.V.M., Ph.D.

University of California, Santa Cruz

The CONCERN award helps new investigators like me and places particular emphasis on research that can make a real difference in the prevention, diagnosis or treatment of cancer. In my case, my research is geared toward managing the dose-limiting side effects of a class of chemotherapeutic agents. New investigators bring in fresh concepts and approaches into cancer research, but we also face enormous challenges in our new position. I didn't realize how daunting it is to establish a research program until I found myself at the helm. Within two to three years we are expected to equip and staff a new laboratory, to meet diverse Departmental and School Commitments (often including substantial teaching or clinical loads), to obtain extramural funding, and to make a name for themselves in our field. The sum of these commitments severely restricts the amount of time we can spend in the laboratory. Obtaining extramural funding is particularly difficult because applications are evaluated according to the track record of the investigator and on showing the feasibility of the approach. New investigators are typically weaker on both counts yet compete on an equal footing with established researchers.

Postdoctoral scholars are highly qualified scientists that are building up their publication records to be able to qualify for managerial positions. By funding a postdoctoral fellow, CONCERN greatly facilitates the ability of new investigators to set up a working laboratory and to obtain preliminary results, which in turn increases our chances of obtaining extramural funding. In my case CONCERN funds allowed me to recruit a scientist with experience in stem cell research. His help has been invaluable in launching my career program. Not only has he been productive in his research, but has helped train a technician and a number of undergraduate students. Having a senior scientist working in the laboratory has allowed me to devote time to think further ahead in the project and also to spend time to prepare applications for extramural funding.

"I am extremely grateful to the CONCERN Foundation for your generosity. By helping new investigators to launch their research, CONCERN really helps promote innovative research that makes a difference in cancer treatment and prevention".

Takiko Daikoku, Ph.D

Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, Cincinnati Ohio

The funds from the Concern Foundation have been of enormous value to our work on cancer biology. Being a woman myself, I have developed a keen interest in endometrial cancer (EMC) with the goal of preventing suffering and deaths from this deadly disease. EMC is a common gynecological malignancy and each year about 40,000 women in the

United States are diagnosed with this cancer, with approximately 6,000 of them dying from the disease. Our continuing objective is to understand the underlying mechanism of initiation and progression of EMC. In this effort, we were able to establish and characterize novel mouse models of EMC during this funding period. We are currently using these mouse models to further explore the initiation and progression of EMC.

Due to the very tight economic situation over the past few years, funding opportunities for researchers in the US have been compromised. Even experienced investigators are struggling to keep their projects alive because of reduced funding opportunities from the NIH, and surely it is tougher for young investigators like me to get funding.

"I sincerely appreciate the Concern Foundation's generosity in funding my research, especially in this difficult situation. This fund allowed me to develop not only current project, but also helped in advancing my career and preparing other grant applications".

Matthew C. Hartman, Ph.D

Virginia Commonwealth University

The overall goal of our project is to find inhibitors of a breast cancer associated protein that can be used to study and control its function. During the past year we have prepared a large amount of the breast cancer associated protein, and we have constructed a diverse collection of peptides from which we will search for inhibitors. At the same time we have also worked to develop a method to improve the likelihood of finding good inhibitors from the collection. These steps have laid the groundwork for the discovery of new inhibitors of this protein which will be used as molecular tools to control its function inside cells. The knowledge gained from these experiments will lead to new treatments for breast cancer.

"The grant from the Concern Foundation has had a significant impact on the work in my laboratory and my career. At the time of receiving the grant, I had a promising idea that I could not pursue because I didn't have the money to hire someone to work on it. Now, thanks to the Concern Foundation, we are currently heading into a very exciting phase in this project. Besides the research itself, receiving this grant was also very encouraging to me personally. The affirmation that my research is headed in important directions has served as a confidence boost that will shape my career for many years".

Paramita Ghosh, Ph.D.

University of California, Davis

(2008-2010 CONquer CanCER Now Grant Recipient)

I am extremely grateful to the Concern Foundation, both donors and officials, for supporting my work and helping me progress in my field of research. Two years back, when I had applied for the Concern Foundation Award, I was trying to test a new idea that I thought was promising. The money from the foundation helped fund that research, and resulted in a publication that was the cover feature in Clinical Cancer Research earlier this year. Based on this publication, and other preliminary data collected since then with Concern Foundation support, I later applied for an RO1 award. Although it was not funded the first time, the critiques were very encouraging, and I will try again. I am confident that by the end of the second year of Concern Foundation funding, I will have enough data to write a second paper and to answer all questions raised by the critiques.

Farzad Esni, Ph.D.

University of Pittsburgh

(2009 CONquer CanCER Now Grant Recipient)

If it's difficult to make your first million in business, I guess it has to be even harder for young scientists these days to get their first big funding. As a junior investigator, your research is normally supported by your department for 3 years, after which you're expected to have received extramural funding. This is reminiscent of the "good old days" when perhaps it was much easier to get your first big funding within 3 years.

However, the situation has changed dramatically, and now you need more than three years to generate enough data and perhaps more importantly to accumulate enough credentials as an independent researcher to get support from agencies such as NIH or NCI.

The project I am working on with Concern Foundation's funding is the role of tumor suppressor gene Vhl in pancreatic cancer and development. We have inactivated the gene encoding Vhl specifically in the mouse pancreas. The mutant mice were born according to the Mendelian ratio but died between 3-4 weeks after birth. Thus during the first year of this project, our research has been focused mainly on Vhl's role in the developing pancreas. The pancreas is an organ with two major cell populations; endocrine and exocrine cells. The exocrine compartment is composed of the acinar cells, mainly producing digestive enzymes, and the secreting ducts. One of the earliest events in pancreatic cancer formation is conversion of acinar cells to duct cells.

Interestingly, our results indicate that Vhl is required to maintain acinar cell identity, and that inactivation of this gene leads to transformation of acinar cell to duct cells.

“I believe, funding from Concern Foundation has validated my credentials and also has provided me with resources to generate sufficient data in order to receive my first big extramural funding”.

Dr. Wendong Huang

City of Hope Medical Center

Research that aims to unlock the mysteries of the liver

As bodily organs go, the liver pales by comparison to the powerful heart or the conscious brain. It does have one remarkable ability that sets it apart from the rest, though: It can grow back, even if more than a half of it is removed.

That can be important to survival, but Wendong Huang, Ph.D., assistant professor of gene regulation and drug discovery at City of Hope, also believes this trait also might lie at the core of liver cancer.

Wendong Huang links liver regrowth to cancer, and that is where the Concern Foundation has gotten involved.

If the liver is damaged, even severely, it can heal itself completely. Even with as little as 30 percent of its original mass remaining, the liver can regrow to full size. And no one knows how.

The funding from the Concern Foundation for cancer research will boost his work as his studies are focusing on how the liver repairs itself and how that ability is linked to liver cancer

Huang believes the research could find much-needed answers. “This could help not just liver cancer patients, but patients with other cancer, as well,” he said. “If we can understand this, it could help a lot of people.”

Ignacio Moreno de Alborán, Ph.D.

Centro Nacional de Biotecnología, Madrid Spain

(2008 CONquer CanCER Now Grant Recipient)

First of all, I would like to thank the Concern Foundation and the donors for their help and trust to fund my research. One of the critical phases of an investigator's career is to get enough funding to really establish him/herself as an independent investigator. Very often, you are embarked in a tough competition for funding with senior and well-funded groups. Obviously, this decreases the chances of success in a vital moment of an investigator's professional life.

I believe that a large proportion of the impact of the Concern Foundation Grant is based on its emphasis to target investigators at early stages in their careers. Personally, it will allow me to perform specific and essential experiments that otherwise my group could not afford at this time. We hope that these experiments will shed some light on the molecular mechanisms involved in the generation of lymphomas and will place our group in a better position to get funding in our fight against cancer.

George Klein, M.D.

Karolinska Institute, Stockholm Sweden

Since 1981, Concern Foundation has provided 188 cancer research scientists funding from an annual award that is matched by CRI in New York. This International group of men and women are developing new and novel approaches in four specific areas of cancer research:

To date, 47 research scientists have attained major research positions throughout the world and today lead their own research laboratories.

An additional 58 cancer research "fellows" have successfully defended their thesis work and achieved a higher scientific degree (Doctor of Medical Sciences) as a direct result of their fellowship work under the Concern Foundation grant.

Andrei Khokhlatchev, Ph.D.

University of Virginia

(2008 CONquer CanCER Now Grant Recipient)

Currently, it is difficult to obtain funding as a junior, non-established investigator. For young investigators who are doing basic science research getting funded is very, very difficult. My research currently are considered basic – my laboratory studies how a specific group of proteins called tumor suppressors block proliferation or induce death of cancer cells.

The Concern Foundation grant has a tremendous impact on my research; it allows me to keep my lab running. Currently, it is the only outside source of money that I have. Without the Concern Foundation grant, I wouldn't have money to pay salary for my only postdoctoral fellow and effectively will be forced to end my career as an independent principal investigator. Now, I can continue my research for at least another year and keep applying for the NIH (US Government) funding sources.

Brigitte Gomperts, M.D.

University of California, Los Angeles

(2006 CONquer CanCER Now Grant Recipient)

I received funding from the Concern Foundation two years ago to fund a brand new project in my laboratory. We work on repair and regeneration by adult stem cells in the lung and at that time we had a small amount of preliminary data to show that a stem cell in the airway epithelium could be a tumor initiating cell in the development of lung cancer. Without the Concern Foundation funding, this project would likely not have come to fruition and the important discoveries on a tumor initiating stem cell in lung cancer would not have been performed. We are currently in the process of writing up our findings and will soon be submitting the manuscript to the journal Cancer Cell.

We are now working on developing new in vivo model systems to define the mechanisms whereby stem cells can initiate the development of lung cancer and thereby attempting to find new therapeutic targets. We have also identified stem cells in the blood of patients with lung cancer that could potentially be used as a biomarker to predict the onset of lung cancer and are further validating this by correlating stem cell levels in the blood with the degree of residual lung cancer after surgical resection of the tumor. We are extremely grateful to the Concern Foundation because without their funding we would not have been able to perform this research and would not have made these exciting breakthroughs in lung cancer.

“The Concern Foundation funding provided us with the money to pursue this avenue of research, which allowed us to generate more preliminary data so that we have just received \$2.38 million from the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine to continue this work on lung cancer stem cells”.

Michael Farrar, Ph.D.

University of Minnesota

(2002-2004 CONquer canCER Now Grant Recipient)

The Concern Foundation grant that I received as a starting assistant professor played an important role in initiating my studies of STAT5 and the development of cells that make up the immune system. This has led to many publications including one this year that appeared in the journal, *Immunity*, describing how STAT5 governs the development of regulatory T cells. My Concern grant also allowed my lab to generate important preliminary data that allowed me to subsequently garner additional support for this work from the NIH. Two of my NIH grants are now focused on the projects described above that were initiated with seed money provided by the Concern Foundation. In addition, I am currently applying for NIH funds to further our work on the role of STAT5 in acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Thus, while when I started my lab we were very much focused on basic questions about the development of the immune system, we now have a substantial focus on the question of how changes in specific genes affect the development of leukemia.

“Today, I have the pleasure of being a part of the Concern Foundation’s scientific review board. Initially this was prompted by my conviction that I should contribute back to the organization that helped me out substantially when I was beginning my career. However, I have also found that interaction with my fellow board members has been very rewarding. For example, most of my work is focused on mouse models of leukemia. I began a collaboration with a fellow member of Concern’s Scientific Review Committee (Dr. Steven Kornblau) whose work is focused on human leukemia’s. This has been a very rewarding collaboration that has allowed us to use basic research discoveries made in the mouse in my lab and use them to better understand the human disease that occurs in patients that Dr. Kornblau and his colleagues are treating for leukemia”.

Weiping Zou, MD, PhD,
Professor of Surgery, Immunology and Biology
Director of Translational Research
University of Michigan Health Systems

(2002 CONquer canCER Now Research Grant Recipient)

This letter is to express my great appreciation to the Concern Foundation for supporting my research very early in my career.

This is the first grant I received as an independent investigator. It allowed me to side up the "Catch-22" problem of young investigators: it's hard to get grants without preliminary data, but hard to get preliminary data without grants. Concern's support has thus played an important role in my career development. Based on the support from this organization, I was able to generate data that has led to publishing an original article in Nature Medicine. More importantly, I have successfully competed for one NCI R01, one grant from the Department of Defense, and one grant from the Louisiana Board of Regents.

"Certainly, the Concern support had an important impact on my ability to win these grant applications. As it is the intent of the Concern to recognize the best young researchers, with the greatest drive for support, give them a head start, and lead them to compete for other important support, I will not request the second year funding".

Eitan Yefenof, Professor and Chairman
The Lautenberg Center of Immunology and Cancer Research
Hebrew University, Jerusalem Israel

The strength of the Lautenberg Center stands on hallmarks of scientific excellence, competitiveness and international collaborations. Being at the forefront of basic immunology and cancer research, the Center is aware of its responsibility to provide state of the art infrastructure and a stimulating ambience to its scientists. The Concern Foundation and their steadfast and unwavering support for over 40 years has enabled us to achieve and maintain this position in the cancer research community.

Investigations at the Lautenberg Center range over a spectrum of topics in cellular and biochemical immunology, molecular cell biology and genetics, cancer biology and virology. Although the specific research projects differ widely, the Center achieves a high degree of integration of its efforts.

The Center stands at the hub of an international network of scientific endeavors. Many of its graduate students and post-doctoral fellows come from abroad. Senior scientists from other institutions are constant visitors of the Center, presenting lectures and participating for various periods of time in its research program. All the Center's scientists are involved in collaborative research efforts with colleagues at Hadassah Medical Center, other hospitals and leading universities and research centers in Israel and other parts of the world.

The scientific endeavors of the Center are on the level of basic fundamental research. Nonetheless, we keep before us the eventual clinical implications of our studies, and at the appropriate time provide the impetus for subsequent clinical investigations in conjunction with medical units in Israel and other countries.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Concern Foundation and the many friends and benefactors for your commitment of the Lautenberg Center scientists. Your ongoing support is of outmost importance to secure the high quality of research performed by the Center's scientific teams. We value this partnership and trust that it is of a mutual benefit.