Largest Private Funder of Melanoma Receives Vital Support from the Jeffrey Epstein VI Foundation

The Melanoma Research Alliance (MRA) has just received a pivotal donation from The Jeffrey Epstein VI Foundation to further its support of melanoma research around the world.

The MRA is the largest private funder of melanoma research worldwide. The Alliance funds programs that show significant advances in the prevention, diagnosis, staging and treatment of melanoma, including progress in the causes of carcinogenesis, skin screening, biomarkers, imaging, immunotherapy, molecularly targeted therapy and combination therapy. Since 2008, the MRA has granted approximately $38 million to over 134 programs and 65 institutions in more than 10 countries.

What is unique about the MRA though is that it aims to support not just the most effective research it can find but the most efficient. Furthermore, all funding goes directly to sponsoring research, as opposed to a large administrative staff.

"Efficiency in medical research is critical," Jeffrey Epstein remarked, whose own foundation focuses on supporting cutting edge science. Scientists have to have financial autonomy to prioritize their goals. Too many of our best institutes are handicapped by bureaucratic directives which don't always foster the best results."

Today, melanoma is the deadliest of all skin cancers. It also has the highest rate of occurrence as compared to other cancers in the US. The rate of long term survival however, has remained static over the last forty years at an appallingly low rate of 15%.

Some of the promising programs that received funding from the MRA via The Jeffrey Epstein VI Foundation include, Rockefeller University for therapeutic targeting of novel metastatic microRNAs in human melanoma, Georgetown University for kinetics and effects of vemurafenib on intratumoral immunity, the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research, Melbourne-Austin Branch for targeting inducible invasive cells in melanoma and Yale University, School of Medicine for regulatory macrophages: a new therapeutic target in melanoma.

"These new grants address critical issues in the prevention, detection, staging and treatment of melanoma that are central to making further clinical advances against this disease", said MRA Chief Science Officer Dr. Suzanne L. Topalian. "This is a time of unprecedented opportunity in melanoma research, and these projects are anticipated to result in near-term benefits for patients."