Abstract

The Relating Clinical Outcomes in Multiple Myeloma to Personal Assessment of Genetic Profile (CoMMpass) study is an initiative of the Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation’s (MMRF) Personalized Medicine Initiative and aims to discover the molecular and genetic changes behind multiple myeloma in hopes of better defining patient subgroups. As a partnership between 17 academic centers, five pharmaceutical companies, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the goal of this eight-year study is to create a database that can accelerate future clinical trials and personalized treatment strategies.

Mission

As part of MMRF’s Personalized Medicine Initiative, the CoMMpass study aims to discover biomarkers that can better define the biological basis of multiple myeloma to help stratify patients. This effort hopes to obtain samples from approximately 1,000 multiple myeloma patients and follow them over time to identify how a patient’s genetic profile is related to clinical progression and treatment response.
The CoMMpass study has the following goals:

- Create a guide to which treatments work best for specific patient subgroups
- Share data with researchers to accelerate drug development for specific subtypes of multiple myeloma patients

**Consortium History**

MMRF was founded in 1998 by twin sisters Kathy Giusti and Karen Andrews, after Kathy was diagnosed with multiple myeloma.

2004: The Multiple Myeloma Research Consortium (MMRC) was founded as MMRF’s first clinical network. The purpose of this consortium was to bring together leading academic centers solely dedicated to Phase I and Phase II myeloma clinical trials.

2004: The MMRC Tissue Bank was established to provide researchers with access to bone marrow aspirate and matched peripheral blood samples.

2006: MMRF launched the Multiple Myeloma Genomics Initiative (MMGI) to identify the druggable genes and pathways in myeloma.

2007: MMRC launched the Multiple Myeloma Genomics Portal, an open-access, myeloma-specific repository of genomic data.

2009: MMGI finished mapping the myeloma genome of 100 patients. As of 2013, more than 900 researchers across the globe have accessed these data.

2011: The Personalized Medicine Initiative was initiated to create tools that match myeloma patients with treatments specific to their individual molecular profiles. The CoMMpass study is part of this effort and, as of 2013, has screened more than 200 patients over a network of 50 clinical centers.

2012: MMRF entered into a public-private partnership with the VA through the CoMMpass study.
MMRF was instrumental in the launch of six new U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)–approved multiple myeloma drugs and set into motion 45 new clinical trials. According to MMRC, its sponsored trials begin 60 percent faster and patients are enrolled in clinical trials 10 percent faster than the industry standard. MMRC clinical trials currently have eight drug studies entering the last steps before FDA approval.

Structure & Governance

The MMRF founders, Kathy Giusti and Karen Andrews, remain actively involved in the foundation. The governance structure consists of:

- The Board of Directors is composed of experts in medicine, science, business, and law who provide strategic guidance and oversight.
- The Executive Committee provides expertise in all aspects of drug discovery and development.
- The Honorary Board of Directors is composed of high-profile celebrities who endorse MMRF’s activities.
- The Leadership Council is composed of external business leaders who provide expertise and resources.
- The Technology Board is composed of leaders who provide guidance in advancing the research portfolio.

MMRF operates as a hub-and-spoke model, where there is central management, operating principles, and parameters that govern and provide oversight to a distributed laboratory network. This ensures that the resources, expertise, and strengths of each individual research institution are leveraged to accelerate the study. Operational management of the CoMMpass study is by co-principal investigators from an academic research institution and a member of the MMRF staff. The participating clinical sites have on-site staff who specialize in myeloma.
Financing

MMRF assets for 2011 were greater than $26 million, composed of private foundation grants (27 percent), revenue from events (28 percent), healthcare corporate donations (33 percent), and individual contributions (8 percent). A precompetitive, consortium-based fund was established to support the CoMMpass study, which includes approximately 50 percent industry funding and 50 percent patient funds from MMRF.

Intellectual Property

CoMMpass is based on an open data access model, and therefore participating academic and pharmaceutical industry partners release their data to the public. The partners have created a patent-free/intellectual-property free zone within the collaboration in which study partners are allowed a several-month period of data exclusivity.

Patent Engagement

MMRF has been an active forum for the multiple myeloma patient community. The foundation holds regular education events and symposia and makes available educational resources through videos and emails for patients and families. The newest feature within the CoMMpass study is a formalized hotline for patients, which is supported by R.N. specialists trained in multiple myeloma. The CoMMpass study itself is designed to receive family and caregiver input. Input for the study was received from several patient advocacy and research organizations, such as Accelerate Brain Cancer Cure, Adenoid Cystic Carcinoma Research Foundation, ALS Therapy Development Foundation, Autism Speaks, Cancer Research and Prevention Foundation, Caring for Carcinoid Foundation, Lance Armstrong Foundation, Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson’s Research, Myelin Repair Foundation, Myeloproliferative Disorders Foundation, Prostate Cancer Foundation, and the Sarcoma Foundation of America.

MMRF has funded more than 250 researchers at more than 130 institutions worldwide through its Senior Research and Fellows Awards and 11 biotech and pharmaceutical companies through its Biotech Investment Awards.
MMRF uses the following factors to determine the impact of its projects:

- Grant dollars awarded
- Clinical trials started
- Number of patients in the myeloma registry
- Number of myeloma genes mapped
- Number of scientists accessing the portal for information

As of 2013, the CoMMpass study is on target in the patient enrollment phase.

Data Sharing

In order to facilitate discoveries and development related to targeted therapies, the comprehensive data from CoMMpass is placed in an open-access research portal. The data will be part the MMRF Personalized Medicine Platform, which will combine CoMMpass data with those collected from MMRF’s Genomics Initiative. It is hoped that the longitudinal data, combined with the annotated bio-specimens, will help provide insights that can accelerate personalized therapies.

Points of Contact

Walter Capone
email: caponew@themmrf.org

Ann Quinn Young
email: quinnyounga@themmrf.org
Sponsors & Partners

The CoMMpass study includes more than two dozen clinical sites, industry partners, contract research organizations, and technology-based organizations.

Amgen/Onyx Pharmaceuticals
Atlanta Cancer Care
Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute
Bay Area Cancer Research Group, LLC
Baylor Research Institute
Billings Clinic
Bristol-Myers Squibb
Broome Oncology
Cancer Care Centers of South Texas
Cancer Care Northwest
Cancer Center of Kansas
Carl & Dorothy Bennett Cancer Center
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center
East Carolina University
Emory University
Gabrail Cancer Center
GenoSpace
Grand Rapids Clinical Oncology Program
Hackensack University Medical Center
Hematology Oncology Clinic
Hutchinson Clinic
Illinois Cancer Specialists
Johnson & Johnson/Janssen Pharmaceuticals
Maimonides Cancer Center
Marshfield Clinic
Mayo Clinic College of Medicine
Medical Associates of Brevard
Millennium/Takeda Oncology Group
Mount Sinai School of Medicine
Northwest Cancer Specialists
Ocala Oncology Center
Oregon Health and Sciences University
Providence St. Mary Regional Cancer Center
Rockwood Clinic, PS
Rocky Mountain Cancer Centers
Sarah Cannon Research Institute
Sciode Medical Associates
Sharp Memorial Hospital
Tennessee Oncology
Texas Oncology
The Baton Rouge Clinic, AMC
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
University of California, San Francisco
University of Chicago
University of Nebraska
University of Southern California
Virginia Cancer Specialists, PC
Washington University
Waverly Hematology Oncology
Weill Cornell Medical College
Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital

Updated: 05/24/2016