

Researcher Spotlight

Leading Advancements in Hematologic Treatment Options

**Dr. Sawa
Ito**

In 2023, Cures Within Reach funded **Dr. Sawa Ito** at **University of Pittsburgh** to expand a pilot trial investigating interferon-gamma to help treat acute myeloid leukemia (AML) and myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS) patients after allogeneic hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (alloSCT). Data provided from this completed trial helped catalyze more than \$4 million in follow-on funding from the FDA and private donors in 2024 for this now-ongoing, larger, multi-site trial.

Dr. Ito is an accomplished assistant professor at University of Pittsburgh. In 2016, she was honored with the Distinguished Clinical Teachers Award from the NIH, and she won the American Society of Hematology's Medical Educators Institute Award.

Dr. Ito's clinical interests included hematologic malignancies, stem cell transplantation, adoptive cell therapy, and biomarkers in graft-versus-host disease and graft-versus-leukemia effect, and her work has been published in multiple high impact journals. Her research goal is to find ways to create an anti-leukemia immunotherapy utilizing the patient's own immune system, avoiding the complication of alloSCT altogether.



Profile

Dr. Sawa Ito is an Assistant Professor at University of Pittsburgh in Hematology-Oncology and Immunology. She received her MD/PhD from Hokkaido University, and completed her residency at University of Pittsburgh and a fellowship at the NIH.

CWR Funding

In this completed Phase I clinical trial, Dr. Ito and her team confirmed and strengthened earlier pilot trial results using interferon-gamma to help treat AML and MDS after allogeneic hematopoietic stem cell transplantation. Data from this study is now supporting an FDA-funded, multicenter clinical trial. Dr. Ito and this trial represent two of Cures Within Reach's Communities:

- Rare Disease
- Oncology



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