

June 15, 2017

Rexanna's Foundation for Fighting Lung Cancer  
Mrs. Lisa Spain, Executive Director

Dear Lisa,

I would like to personally thank you and the entire Rexanna Foundation for your recent gift. I am a junior faculty at MD Anderson Thoracic/Head and Neck Medical Oncology and I am very excited and motivated to use the experience of the institution, learn from our patients while we providing exceptional care and hopefully translate our understanding in lung cancer to advancements in patient care.

The award from Rexanna Foundation is critical for two research projects regarding "Biomarkers for personalizing immunotherapy in metastatic lung cancer". Immunotherapy has revolutionized the lung cancer therapy but lacks ideal predictive markers that can identify patient subsets who have a higher chance of response or who has a higher risk for toxicity. The first project will analyze the genetic variations among patients that may affect individual's response to certain drugs. We expect this project to improve patient selection for the ideal treatment and also identify patients who have higher risk for drug side effects. The second project will correlate the microorganisms in the gut with the risk of inflammation of the colon and response to immunotherapy. This project will help us to understand if by modifying the gut microbiome it is possible to increase the response rates to immunotherapy and protect individuals from colon inflammation.

I would like to sincerely thank for the support by Rexanna Foundation to our projects, which we hope will greatly contribute to our efforts to improve our patients' outcomes. We look forward to reporting our research progress to you next year.

Sincerely,

Mehmet Altan, MD

