Celebrate Women's History Month

Christine M. Lovly, MD, PhD, is targeting lung cancer.

March 22, 2019 By Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation

To make breakthroughs, trailblazing scientists must possess deep conviction in themselves and a vision of how they can make an impact. For Damon Runyon Clinical Investigator Christine M. Lovly, MD, PhD, this realization came at 16 years old, when she decided that her calling was to help cancer patients in the clinic and seek better treatments in the lab. "I feel so fortunate to have a unique angle of seeing both the scientific side and the clinical side of medicine. It's so exciting when something that I've worked on in the laboratory translates into clinically meaningful therapies for patients," says Lovly.

Lovly is addressing the critical need for better approaches to treat lung cancer, the leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the world. She is developing novel therapies that target cancer-causing mutations in EGFR and ALK genes that will be more effective and have fewer side effects. Lovly has also discovered new mutations that contribute to a patient forming resistance to therapy. To prevent the reoccurrence of cancer, she is looking for combination therapies that can target multiple abnormal cellular pathways. Her findings have led to a Phase III global clinical trial to test a promising new treatment option.

Lovly believes that continued research and collaboration will find the answers to stopping cancers. "I would not have been able to fulfill my dream that started when I was in high school without the support from Damon Runyon, and I am sincerely grateful to the Foundation for providing me with a scientific 'family' to help build my career."

She also attributes her success to the strong mentors in her life and hopes that she can provide this level of positive support and encouragement to other women interested in science and medicine. "My strong message to every girl out there is to believe in yourself! Know that your voice is powerful and important. Don't let your own self-doubt get in the way. And know that you can excel in your profession with rigor, grace, and dignity while also exceling at being a kind, supportive, nurturing, and powerful woman."

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