

**Publications of the Week**

**Merkel Cell Polyomavirus-Specific and CD39<sup>+</sup>CLA<sup>+</sup> CD8 T Cells As Blood-Based Predictive Biomarkers for PD-1 Blockade in Merkel Cell Carcinoma**

First Author: Heeju Ryu | Senior Author: Evan Newell (*pictured*)  
Cell Reports Medicine | Fred Hutch and UW



Merkel cell carcinoma is a skin cancer often driven by Merkel cell polyomavirus (MCPyV) with high rates of response to anti-PD-1 therapy despite low mutational burden. Using mass cytometry and combinatorial tetramer staining, researchers find that baseline frequencies of blood MCPyV-specific cells correlated with response and survival. [Abstract](#) | [Press Release](#)

**Circulating Cancer-Specific CD8 T Cell Frequency Is Associated with Response to PD-1 Blockade in Merkel Cell Carcinoma**

First Authors: Thomas Pulliam and Saumya Jani | Senior Author: Paul Nghiem (*pictured*)  
Cell Reports Medicine | Fred Hutch and UW



Merkel cell polyomavirus (MCPyV) causes most Merkel cell carcinomas (MCCs). All patients with virus-driven MCC express MCPyV oncoproteins, facilitating identification of virus-specific T cells. Researchers studied MCPyV-specific T cells from 27 patients with MCC using MCPyV peptide-HLA-I multimers, 26-color flow cytometry, single-cell transcriptomics, and T cell receptor sequencing. [Abstract](#)

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**Awards**

**Dr. Farid Moussavi-Harami Receives Paul F. Cranefield Award**

UW Medicine



The Society of General Physiologists has selected Dr. Farid Moussavi-Harami (*pictured*), Assistant Professor of Cardiology, as the 2024 Paul F. Cranefield Award winner. The Award is meant to recognize an independent young investigator who has published an outstanding article in the *Journal of General Physiology*. Dr. Moussavi-Harami is a physician-scientist and his research interest is in muscle mechanics and finding novel therapies for heart failure. [Read More](#)

**\$7.3 Million NIH Grant Funds Effort to Advance Kidney Microphysiological Testing Platforms**

Institute for Stem Cell & Regenerative Medicine (ISCRM)



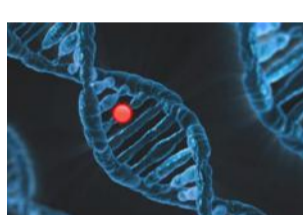
Kidney disease researchers at the UW, including ISCRM faculty members Drs. Beno Freedman and Ed Kelly (*pictured*), will use a multimillion-dollar federal grant to advance drug-development platforms. Their research aims to finalize multiple kidney-tissue platforms for drug testing, which would reduce reliance on animal tests in the production of future medications. [Read More](#)

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**Local News**

**Birth Coincides with Rapid Changes in Gene Activities**

UW Medicine



Scientists are eager to understand how the genome of the house mouse, *Mus musculus*, orchestrates a routine yet astounding transformation of turning from a single fertilized cell to a fully formed pup in just three weeks. New techniques have enabled scientists at UW to obtain, at the single-cell level, an improved, annotated time-lapse of mouse prenatal development. [Read More](#)

**From Biotech to 3D Printing, Here Are Seven Startups That Recently Spun Out of UW**

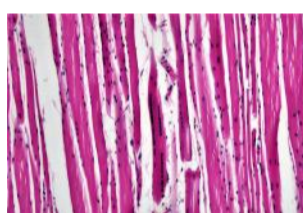
GeekWire



UW has spun out 52 startups in the past five years, and granted more than 2,000 licenses. There are currently more than 110 active UW spinouts that employ more than 1,000 people collectively. Those companies have raised more than \$4.1 billion over the past five years. GeekWire has compiled a list of seven new spinouts, including companies working on next-generation gene therapies, cancer-fighting drugs, and more. [Read More](#)

**PPMD Provides \$500,000 in Funding to Kinea Bio Through PPMD Venture Pathways Program to Support Next-Gen Midi-Dystrophin Gene Therapy Development**

Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy (PPMD)



PPMD has announced that they are providing \$500,000 in funding to Kinea Bio, Inc. through PPMD Venture Pathways, the organization's venture philanthropy program which provides industry funding to accelerate therapeutic development. This funding aims to advance the development of the company's next-generation adeno-associated virus mediated midi-dystrophin gene replacement therapy for the treatment of individuals with Duchenne. [Read More](#)

**AstraZeneca Completes \$1.1B Acquisition of UW Biotech Spinout Icosavax**

GeekWire



Biotech giant AstraZeneca has completed its \$1.1 billion acquisition of Icosavax, a Seattle-based spinout from the UW's Institute for Protein Design. Founded in 2017, Icosavax is developing vaccines that resemble naturally occurring viruses. Its lead product targets respiratory viruses. The company raised more than \$150 million from private investors before going public in 2021. [Read More](#)

**Fred Hutch to Lead New Federal Cancer Screening Research Network**

Fred Hutch



Fred Hutch is at the helm of a new clinical trials consortium, the Cancer Screening Research Network. This new network was created by the National Cancer Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health, to advance President Joe Biden's Cancer Moonshot by improving early detection of cancers. Dr. Garnet Anderson (*pictured*) from Fred Hutch will lead the network's Coordinating and Communication Center. [Read More](#)

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**📅 Upcoming Events in Seattle**

- February 28 8:00 AM **Seattle BioTech & Bagels Morning Virtual Meetup**  
Online
- February 28 11:30 AM **PNRI's Science Matters Seminar: Rare Disease Research and Advocacy**  
Online
- March 7 2:00 PM **Pacific Northwest Regional Resources for Biomedical Entrepreneurs**  
Online
- March 8 9:00 PM **Mad Science**  
Here-After
- April 4 2:00 PM **Biomedical Innovation Fireside Chats: Regulatory Strategy**  
Online

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**📁 Science Jobs in Seattle**

- Lab Specialist**  
Seattle Science Foundation
- Implementation Science Research Coordinator**  
UW
- Open Rank Faculty Position in Cancer Cell Therapy**  
Fred Hutch
- Research Associate, Image-Based Assay Developer**  
Allen Institute
- Senior Scientist, Nucleic Acid Chemist**  
GenScript Biotech Corporation

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