

# ColoCare Study



Dear ColoCare Study Participant,

*Thank you for being a part of this international research study moving both the prevention and treatment of colorectal cancer forward! We want you to know we are doing our best to continue this vital research during the COVID-19 pandemic and are especially grateful to you for the time you put into completing the study tasks during this difficult time.*

*While all of our lives have changed in ways we could not have imagined, we know that cancer patients and their families may face unique challenges during this time. We are investigating the many ways this outbreak and stay-at-home orders may affect your follow-up visits. We will be reaching out to you by email and/or phone to complete surveys and will coordinate with our Siteman sites to collect biospecimen during your standard lab visit.*

*We are also sharing some of our recent research findings and why your contributions matter so much. You are indeed making a difference to colorectal cancer research and we greatly appreciate each and every one of you!*

Sincerely,

*Dr. Adetunji Toriola, MD, PhD, Site PI, ColoCare WUSM on behalf of the ColoCare Study Team*



## ENROLLMENT UPDATES

We are happy to report the ColoCare Study has been active for over 12 years across 7 sites. To date, we have enrolled 196 participants at the Washington University, St. Louis site, and over 2,600 participants in the United States and Germany. Enrolling from multiple geographic locations allows us to understand the challenges different patients face, including those living in rural vs. urban areas, a particularly important question in the Midwest.

## You are making a difference!

Did you know that our gut harbors 3.3 million bacteria that interact with our gut health and influence our health and how we respond to treatment? One of the objectives of the ColoCare Study is to study the good and harmful microbes that may affect gastrointestinal diseases such as colorectal cancer. With your help, we will collect stool samples from the convenience of your home four times throughout the study (consent date, six month, twelve month, and twenty four month time points). We will utilize your samples to understand the role of microbial organisms in influencing cancer treatment and health outcomes. **Please let us know how we can make stool collection easier in order to assist with this important part of our ColoCare research.**

## RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

### *Do bacteria in our intestine help detect colorectal cancer?*

A recent research project that included participants from the ColoCare Study showed that bacteria from stool samples could predict the presence of colorectal cancer. This is exciting news! We expect that finding specific gut bacteria may, in the future, allow early screening for colorectal cancer using a stool sample! *Nature Medicine: Vol 25, Thomas, et al (2019)*



**How can you improve you quality of life after surgery?**

If you have been recently diagnosed with colorectal cancer and having surgery, it is important to maintain a healthy weight. Biljana Gigic, PhD, from the ColoCare Study team at Heidelberg, Germany investigated the relationship between body composition and quality-of-life from the ColoCare Study. We found that quality-of-life and survival may be affected in patients with higher levels of visceral fat and skeletal muscle mass. Patients with higher levels of visceral fat are also likely to experience increased pain six and twelve months after surgery. **Because of you**, we are able to work step by step to improve colorectal cancer patients' quality of life and survival!  
 Nutrients: Vol 12, Gigic, et al (2020)

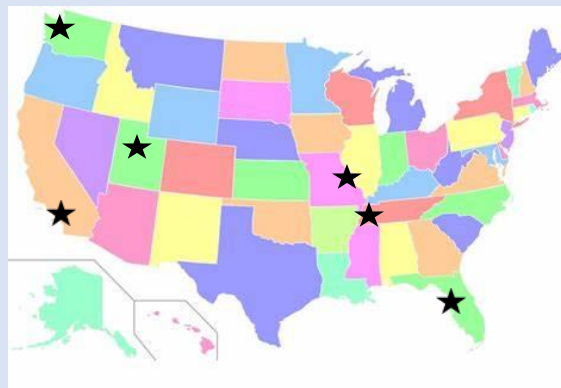


*Biljana Gigic*

**How important is a healthy lifestyle and social support for cancer patients overall wellbeing?**

Claire J. Han, MSN, PhD, at FHCRC, investigated factors that cause distress in colorectal cancer patients 6 and 12 months after they had surgery. With the help of your survey responses, she found that younger age, lower income, advanced tumor state, poorer social support, and poorer baseline health related quality of life were associated with higher levels of distress at 6 and 12 months. Our goal is to take this further and develop strategies to improve social support in patients with colorectal cancer. Journal of Cancer Survivorship: Vol 14, Han, et al (2020)

- Washington University School of Medicine**  
St. Louis, Missouri
- Huntsman Cancer Institute**  
Salt Lake City, Utah
- Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center**  
Seattle, Washington
- Moffitt Cancer Center**  
Tampa, Florida
- Cedars-Sinai Medical Center**  
Los Angeles, California
- University of Tennessee Health Science Center**  
Memphis, Tennessee
- University Hospital Heidelberg**  
Heidelberg, Germany



ColoCare Sites in the United States and Germany

**Connect with other participants**



ColoCare's Community Advisory Board has created an [online platform](#) for sharing and connecting with other study participants. If you wish to join or find out more, email the CAB at: [colocarecab@gmail.com](mailto:colocarecab@gmail.com).

**International Transdisciplinary Cancer Interception Nature Conference**



Six ColoCare team members presented research at this conference in March with speakers from around the world! There were five research posters and three presentations.

**Contact ColoCare Study**

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