

MC3 Memos | March 2025

From MC3 Institute <mc3institute@uw.edu>

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MERKEL CELL CARCINOMA
COLLABORATIVE

MC3 INSTITUTE

Welcome to the first edition of MC3 Memos!

Dear Merkel Community,

We're excited to launch MC3 Memos, a newsletter designed to keep our Merkel Cell Carcinoma Collaborative (MC3) Institute members and community informed about the latest advancements, events, and opportunities within the MC3 Institute.



Caption (l-r): Paul Nghiem, Rima Kulikauskas, Krista Lachance, Candice Church

Our goal is to foster collaboration, share key research updates, and celebrate the incredible work being done in MCC research and patient care. MC3 Memos will be published every few months.

Please note that the MC3 Institute also manages merkelcell.org, an educational website for patients and the broader community. If you have content you'd like to share there, feel free to reach out to us.

MC3 Institute Leadership Team

Paul Nghiem, MD, PhD, Faculty Founder & Director

Candice Church, PhD, Director of Scientific Research

Rima Kulikauskas, BS, Director of Specimen Repository

Krista Lachance, MS, Director of People & Programs

Highlights



MC3 Institute Launch Event

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the MC3 Institute Launch Event!

On Monday, Jan. 27, 2025, over 110 members of the MCC community gathered at the UW Medicine South Lake Union (SLU) campus to celebrate this milestone. Read the event summary and watch the presentation [here](#).



MMIG (MCC Multi-center Interest Group) Meeting

The [MMIG \(MCC Multi-center Interest Group\)](#) Meeting was held as a hybrid event on March 7, 2025, with 77 participants joining in person in Orlando, FL, and virtually. We will be sharing a summary of the meeting notes soon.

NFCR-Supported Study Helps Identify Cells That Naturally Fight Cancer

We're proud to announce the publication of a new National Foundation for Cancer Research (NFCR)-supported study led by Suzanne Topalian, MD, of Johns Hopkins University, and Paul Nghiem, MD, PhD, Faculty Founder and Director of the MC3 Institute.

The study titled, "[A minimal gene set characterizes TIL specific for diverse tumor antigens across different cancer types.](#)" was published on Feb. 3, 2025, in Nature Communications, and identified a small group of key genes that help find special immune cells called tumor-infiltrating lymphocytes (TILs) that naturally fight cancer. [Learn More.](#)

MC3 in the News



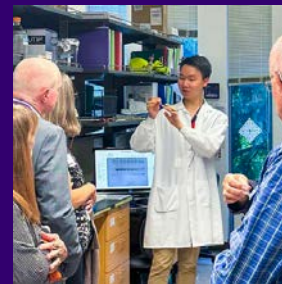
New institute musters forces against lethal skin cancer

UW Medicine Newsroom
Published Jan 30, 2025



The Merkel Cell Carcinoma Collaborative Institute launches, igniting a new era of research into a rare skin cancer

The Daily
Published Feb 28, 2025



Skin in the game: Changing the story of Merkel cell carcinoma cancer

Fred Hutch News
Published Feb 6, 2025

MC3 Resources

Become a member of the MC3 Institute

[Learn about the benefits of being a member and apply.](#)

Research Tools

MC3 members can request access to de-identified data and/or specimens for their own research projects. [Learn more.](#)

Opportunities to Collaborate

The MC3 Institute is actively seeking research collaborators for several key studies aimed at improving Merkel cell carcinoma (MCC) treatment and patient outcomes.



Caption: Aubriana McEvoy, MD, MS, presenting at the MMIG meeting in Orlando.

ctDNA-Guided Immune Checkpoint Inhibition Trial

We are developing a randomized clinical trial to evaluate whether immune checkpoint inhibition should begin when circulating tumor DNA (ctDNA) becomes positive—before a clinical recurrence of MCC.

This study aims to determine whether early intervention improves patient outcomes, including progression-free survival and MCC-specific survival. We are currently inviting other centers to participate in the planning phase. [Learn more.](#)

Postoperative Radiation Therapy Study

The MC3 Institute is launching a study to compare the efficacy of postoperative Single-Fraction Radiation Therapy (SFRT) with conventional 5-week radiation therapy for Stage I-II MCC patients at low-to-moderate risk of recurrence. [Learn more.](#)

MCC Recurrence Risk Calculator Validation

We are seeking collaborators for a multi-center study aimed at validating and improving the MCC recurrence risk calculator. This study will refine risk assessment tools to enhance patient care. [Learn more.](#)

If you or your institution are interested in contributing to any of these studies, please reach out; mc3institute@uw.edu.

Upcoming Events

Stay connected with the MCC research community by attending these upcoming conferences, webinars, and in-person meetings. MC3 members are also encouraged to share events they are hosting.

14th International Symposium on Minimal Residual Cancer

May 7-9, 2025 | Nice, France

-This symposium will focus on the latest advancements in minimal residual disease research. [Learn more.](#)

-Organizing Committee: Prof. Dr. Paul Hofman | Prof. Dr. Catherine Alix-Panabières | Prof. Dr. Klaus Pantel

9th Nordic / 2nd European Merkel Cell Carcinoma (MCC) Meeting

August 28-29, 2025 | Stockholm, Sweden

-A key gathering for MCC researchers and clinicians in Europe and beyond. [More details.](#)

-Organizing Committee: Weng-Onn Lui | John Paoli | Nicole Fisher | Jürgen Becker | Lisa Villabona | Thibault Kervarrec

Merkel CELLebration Dinner

Sept. 15, 2025 | Seattle, WA & Virtual (Zoom)

- Join us for an evening of community and collaboration. Details forthcoming.
- Organized by the MC3 Institute.

4th International MCC Symposium

April 27-28, 2026 | Boston, MA

- This symposium will bring together leading MCC researchers and clinicians to discuss groundbreaking advancements in the field.
- Planning Committee: Ann W. Silk, MD, MS & Isaac Brownell, MD, PhD (Co-Chairs)
James A. DeCaprio, MD, PhD | Stewart Landers, JD | Danielle Margalit, MD, MPH | David M. Miller, MD, PhD | Sophia Shalhout, PhD | Manisha Thakuria, MD

News from Members

We love celebrating the achievements of our MC3 community! Share your latest publications, awards, grants, job opportunities, or media features with us.

If you have news to share in an upcoming newsletter, please email us at mc3institute@uw.edu.

Support Our Mission

Your support makes a difference! Donate today to help the MC3 Institute continue advancing research and improving patient care for those affected by Merkel cell carcinoma, learn more [here](#).

Stay Connected

Follow the MC3 Institute on social media to stay updated on the latest research, events, and collaboration opportunities:



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