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Cancer Care in
Jordan
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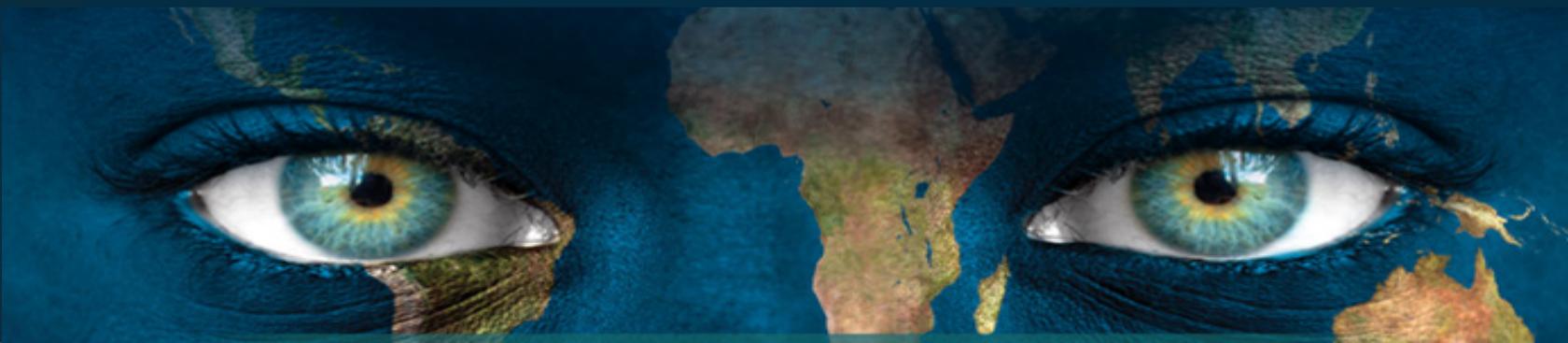
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THE VISIONARY

THE EYE CANCER FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER | FALL 2019

Saving Sight, Saving Life™

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**We are less than one year
from 2020, and ask that you
help make this goal a reality
by donating to the ECF!**



The 2020 Campaign is run by The Eye Cancer Foundation and the International Council of Ophthalmology to save the lives of 1,000 children afflicted with retinoblastoma by the year 2020. Our hope is to decrease the high rates of worldwide mortality from retinoblastoma, the most common primary childhood eye cancer. We prioritize supplying subspecialty-trained retinoblastoma professionals to unserved countries. Click the ECF donate donut to join us in saving children's lives!



Click here!



SAVING SIGHT SAVING LIFE

Visit <https://www.eyecancercure.com/donate> to donate

THE ECF ESTABLISHES THE FIRST EYE PATHOLOGIST IN JORDAN

Prior to the involvement of The Eye Cancer Foundation (ECF), Jordan had no known practicing eye cancer specialists. By sponsoring Dr. Yacoub Yousefs' fellowship training, the ECF helped him establish the first world class eye cancer referral center at The King Hussein Cancer Center in Amman. After years of building this center, Dr. Yousef has trained many ECF eye cancer specialists for the surrounding countries and has offered life and vision-sparing treatments for patients throughout the Middle East. With more and more patients needing eye cancer services, Jordan and the Middle East needed a dedicated specialist in eye pathology.

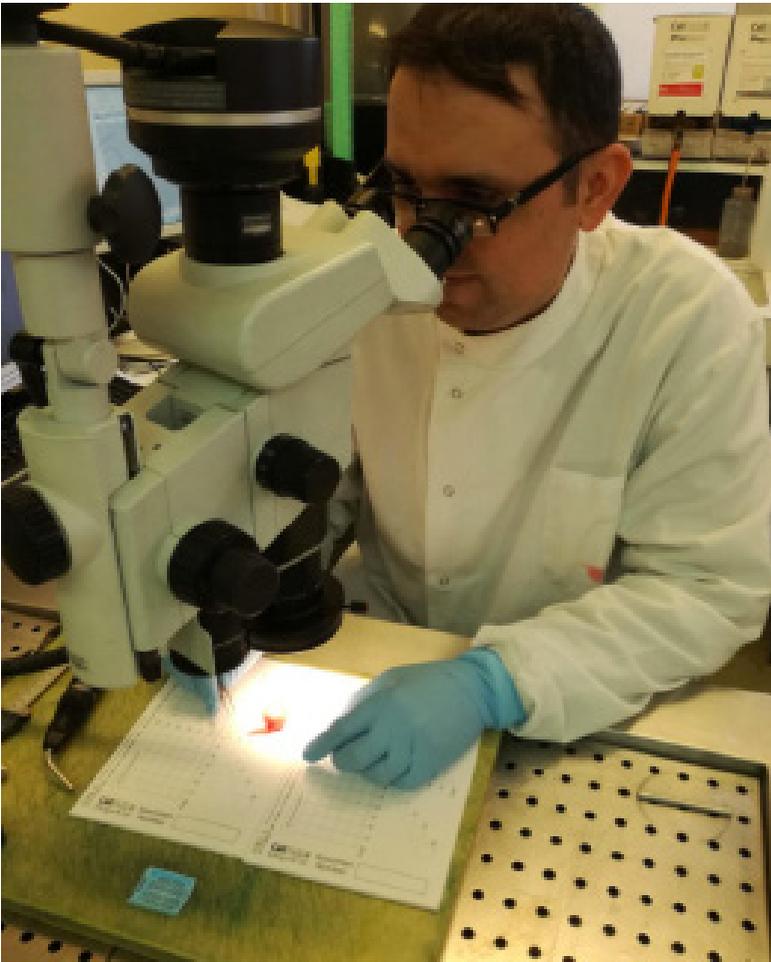
In response, The ECF arranged and supported Dr. Jakub Khzouz's fellowship in ophthalmic pathology and oncology with Dr. Sarah Coupland at the Royal Liverpool Hospital in Liverpool, England.



From left to right: Dr. Jakub Khzouz, Dr. Paul T. Finger, Dr. Sarah Coupland

Dr. Khzouz has now completed his ECF sponsored fellowship, learning modern methods of ophthalmic pathology (adult and pediatric), as well as the diagnosis and treatment of eye cancers.

Dr. Khzouz reports that his exposure to Eye and general Pathology with Dr. Coupland at Liverpool Hospital's pathology laboratory was significantly different from his prior experience in Jordan. He learned that eye cancer specimens must be handled by trained eye pathology specialists.



With respect to complicated pathologies, our fellows have even greater plans for the future of eye cancer treatment in Jordan. Dr. Khouz intends to partner with Dr. Yousef. "I have discussed with my esteemed colleague, and by working together we will improve the quality of the King Hussein Ocular Tumor Service, we will reach out to other laboratories and help doctors in other countries perform molecular and genetic testing for eye cancer patients."

The Eye Cancer Foundation has provided fellowship education and training from some of the most experienced specialists in the world. We motivate our fellows to bring new techniques and advancements to their home countries so that access to optimal eye cancer treatment can become universal. The ECF will continue to support our fellow, Dr. Yousef and Dr. Khouz and now offer Jordan two fellowship-trained eye cancer specialists who are dedicated to saving sight, saving life, and "paying it forward" by teaching additional ECF fellows from other middle eastern countries.

"Proper sample grossing and detailed reporting are important for staging and management," says Dr. Khzouz. "Once back in Jordan, my first project will be to review all the retinoblastoma cases archived in our pathology laboratory, independently report and stage them according to the latest, 8th edition AJCC-TNM system, and compare that with the original reports." Such will be important for research, teaching and patient care purposes, as well as defining the impact and importance of fellowship-training.

However, our goal is not yet complete.

Many more children are in great need! The ECF hopes to place at least one eye cancer specialist in each unserved country.

To donate to this cause, please go to www.eyecancercure.com/donate

Clinical Study on Conjunctival Melanoma Supported by the Eye Cancer Foundation

SHORT REPORT

Open Access

Checkpoint inhibition immunotherapy for advanced local and systemic conjunctival melanoma: a clinical case series



Paul T. Finger^{1,2*}  and Anna C. Pavlick²

This clinical research study was supported by The Eye Cancer Foundation. A series of patients from The New York Eye Cancer Center were facing either massive disfiguring surgery or death from conjunctival melanoma metastasis, So, Dr. Paul T Finger and Dr. Anna Pavlick offered “Checkpoint” drug immunotherapy as a potential way to preserve their eyes and/or lives and it worked! In their paper which appeared in the Journal of Immunotherapy of Cancer, published on the 25th of March 2019, systemic immunotherapy was found effective.

This is important, in that the current treatments for advanced local conjunctival melanoma typically require removal of the eyeball and its surrounding tissues (depending on the extent of the disease) and then typically result in poor local control and metastasis. In addition, classic systemic chemotherapy has not been successful in treating this metastatic

The New York Eye Cancer Center and New York University Division of Medical Oncology find Immunotherapy is effective for locally advanced and metastatic conjunctival melanoma.

disease. This ECF-supported research work compliments another, similar case series published by Dr. Bitá Esmaeli at MD Anderson Cancer Center.

Our study also demonstrates a collaboration between Dr. Finger and Dr. Pavlick who works at the NYU Medical Oncology Department. Together, they initiated the program, retrospectively analyzed their patients results and published them in a most prestigious scientific journal.

In addition, they found that topical interferon eye drops appeared to augment resolution of the local conjunctival melanomas. This ECF-sponsored research indicates that drugs that make our immune system stronger can be used to fight conjunctival malignant melanoma. This is hopeful and now larger, more statistically significant and/or data mining studies should be performed.



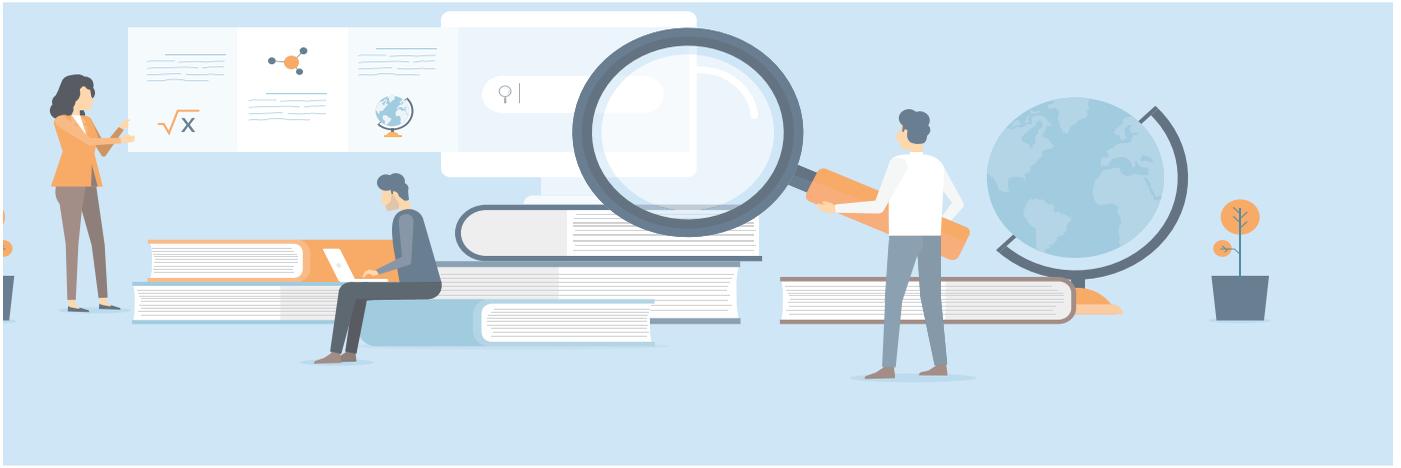
Patient BEFORE immunotherapy treatment



Patient AFTER immunotherapy treatment

This ECF-sponsored research indicates that drugs that make our immune system stronger can be used to fight conjunctival malignant melanoma.

ECF SPONSORED RESEARCH WINS BEST OF IJO AWARD



In January of 2018, Dr. Fingers' ECF fellow Dr. Sonal Chaugule, published an ECF-sponsored New York Eye Cancer Center study “Topical Chemotherapy for Giant Ocular Surface Squamous Neoplasia (OSSN) of the Conjunctiva and Cornea: Is Surgery Really Necessary?” in the Indian Journal of Ophthalmology (IJO) where it was chosen for the best of IJO Award!

Markedly reducing the need for eye surgeries, this finding was a feature at the recent International Society for Ophthalmic Oncology (ISOO) 2019 meeting and the 2017 American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) meeting. This study showed the surprising efficacy of chemotherapy eye drops as curative treatment for large squamous tumors on the eye. During this study, there was no evidence of vision-limiting complications, no tumor recurrences, and no patients required additional treatment for their giant OSSN. For all patients in the study, their cancer was cured, proving to researchers and the world that topical chemotherapy drops were not only safe, but also effective as sole treatment for “giant” OSSN.

INTERNATIONAL MULTICENTER COOPERATIVE STUDY SUPPORTED BY THE EYE CANCER FOUNDATION

JAMA Ophthalmology | **Original Investigation**

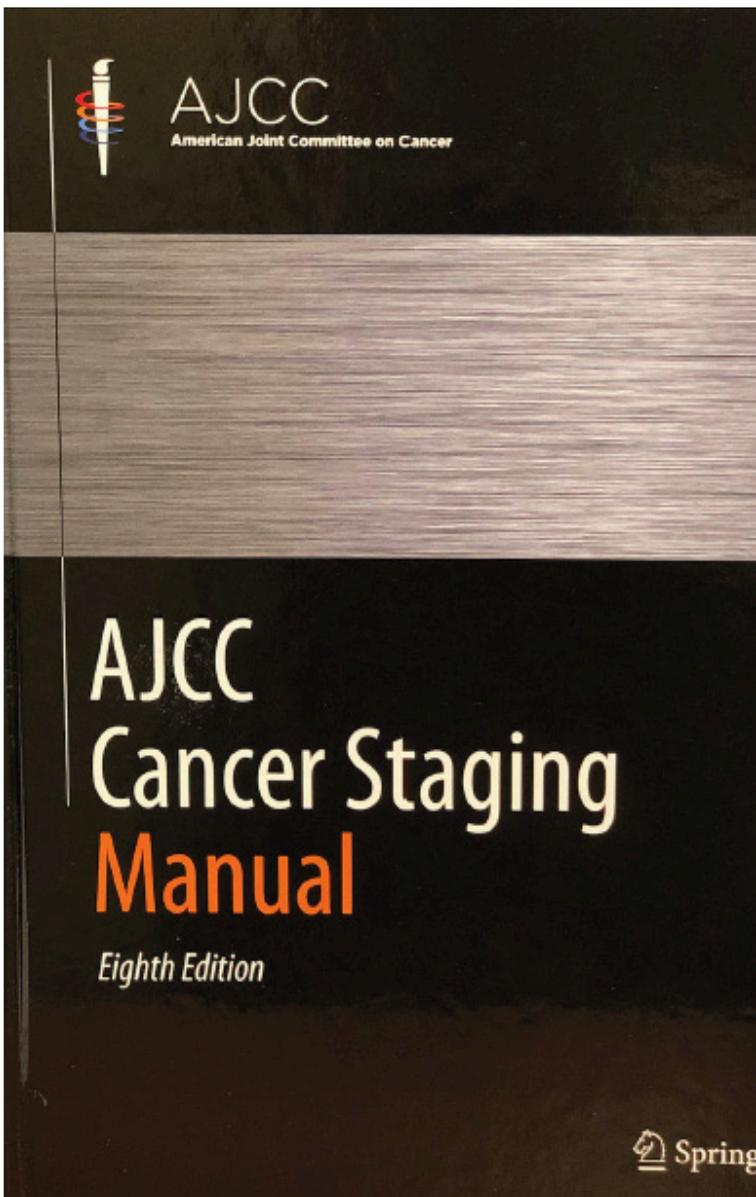
Multicenter, International Assessment of the Eighth Edition of the American Joint Committee on Cancer *Cancer Staging Manual* for Conjunctival Melanoma

Puneet Jain, MD; Paul T. Finger, MD; Bertil Damato, MD; Sarah E. Coupland, MD, PhD; Heinrich Heimann, MD; Nihal Kenawy, MD; Niels J. Brouwer, MD; Marina Marinkovic, MD; Sjoerd G. Van Duinen, MD, PhD; Jean Pierre Caujolle, MD; Celia Maschi, MD; Stefan Seregard, MD; David Pelayes, MD; Martin Folgar, MD; Yacoub A. Yousef, MD; Hatem Krema, MD; Brenda Gallie, MD; Alberto Calle-Vasquez, MD; for the American Joint Committee on Cancer Ophthalmic Oncology Task Force

The 8th edition, American Joint Committee on Cancer (AJCC) Cancer Staging Manual offers the best consensus guidelines as written by over 50 eye cancer specialists, from 18 countries on 4 continents.

In 2016, the AJCC released the 8th edition, conjunctival melanoma staging system which features 12 new Eye cancer staging systems, a wide range of new staging definitions, and an emphasis on personalized-medicine.

This world-wide eye cancer staging system is used and respected by medical, ophthalmic, and radiation oncologists because it standardizes data reporting, prognosis, and selection of the best treatment for conjunctival melanoma. Nonetheless, a collaborative multicenter international registry was organized by our very own Dr. Finger to evaluate the accuracy of such a staging system. In



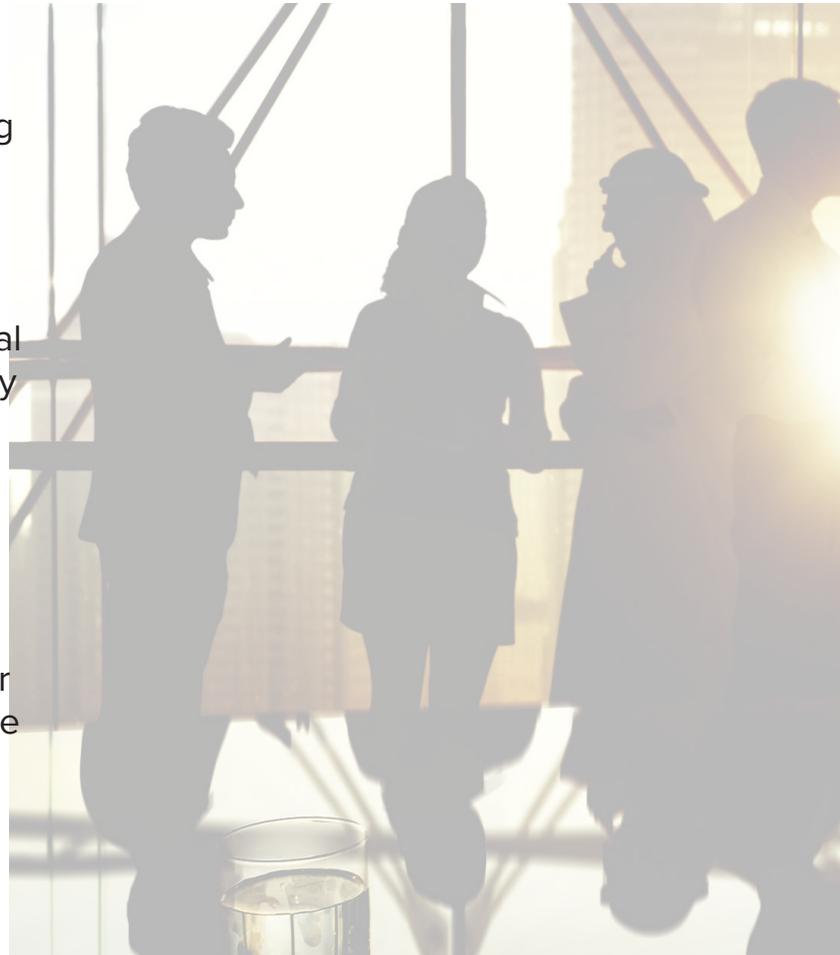
addition to the 19 co-authors listed, Dr. Puneet Jain led the analysis, writing and collaborative revision during his [Eye Cancer Foundation](#)-sponsored Fellowship with Dr. Finger.

This study, performs the first ever international multicenter study to evaluate the validity of the eighth edition of the American Joint Committee on Cancer (AJCC) Cancer Staging Manual in estimating mortality rates of metastasis from conjunctival melanoma. The 8th edition AJCC ophthalmic oncology staging systems were written by more than 50 eye cancer specialists from 18 countries.

In this study, co-investigators utilized internet-based data sharing, reviewing 288 conjunctival melanoma patient medical histories. This study included data from 10 ophthalmic oncology centers in 9 countries over 4 continents — 2 in the United States and 1 in Canada, Colombia, Argentina, France, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Sweden, and Jordan. Clinical (cT) and pathologic (pT) staging were performed according to the staging system for conjunctival melanoma in the 8th edition of the AJCC Cancer Staging Manual.

This study revealed new insights by analyzing large numbers of these rare tumors. The findings corroborate the validity of the 8th edition of the AJCC Cancer Staging Manual. However, it also found several independent factors that are associated with increased mortality, such as tumor thickness, tumor invasion, and ulceration. Ultimately, this study supported the continued use of conjunctival melanoma staging system as published in the 8th edition of the AJCC Cancer Staging Manual.

ECF fellowships are known to foster ophthalmic oncology training, curiosity, learning and ability to perform research!



MARYANN'S STORY

I have been cancer-free with 20/20 vision for 29 years. However, my diagnosis was much different before then, as I battled choroidal melanoma in my right eye, the most common intraocular malignant tumor and the second most common melanoma in the body. I had just given birth to my third son when my ophthalmologist referred me to Dr. Finger. Upon hearing my diagnosis, I felt frightened to the highest degree, as I was a mother of two young sons and an infant. My life as a mother had just begun when I fully realized my condition, an experience that was surreal to me at the time. Nevertheless, Dr. Finger was able to reassure me, which put me at ease from my very first visit.

Regarding my melanoma, Dr. Finger thoroughly explained all of my treatment options in detail and how each treatment would impact my vision. He also answered all my questions meticulously. Dr. Finger used plaque radiation therapy in order to eradicate the tumor. I was quite fortunate as part of my treatment to be able to participate in an FDA approved clinical trial devised by Dr. Finger in which he used a microwave-heating device

(hyperthermia) along with a radiation plaque. This combined therapy allowed for a significant reduction in radiation dose which enabled myself and others in the trial to retain our vision.

I was able to preserve my vision due to Dr. Finger's tireless efforts and dedication to patients. Many like myself have passed through Dr. Finger's hands, treated for their eye tumors and currently cancer-free and with their vision. However, there are still many individuals in underserved and unserved countries without the opportunity to be properly diagnosed and treated.

That is where The Eye Cancer Foundation comes in with its mission to support the education of ophthalmic oncology fellows in underserved countries. With your help, they will be able to train many more ophthalmologists all over the world with hopes of vastly reducing the incidence of eye cancer in unserved countries.

ECF APPEAL

Since 1998, The Eye Cancer Foundation have offered online information, supported education, and gave support to eye cancer patients here in the USA and around the world.

The board of The Eye Cancer Foundation discovered that, world-wide, 7 out of 10 children die from retinoblastoma each year. This is at least partly due to the fact that 40 countries had no eye cancer specialist or were vastly underserved. The Eye Cancer Foundation decided that we could plant a seed (a fellowship-trained eye cancer specialist) in each country. That is why we started the 2020 campaign. Maybe, it will take more, but we believe it is a start.

Since 1998, the Eye Cancer Foundation has relied on your support! You, our donors, are the reason that the foundation has been able to support cutting edge research in new methods of diagnosis and treatment of eye tumors and ophthalmic side effects. For example, this year ECF sponsored research reported that metastatic conjunctival melanoma can be controlled with immunotherapy.

Your support can turn an unserved country into a served country, to give eye cancer patients a fighting chance to see and live. Your support will get us closer to uncovering the next best treatment. Please don't forget that how important your gift is to us! Your gift today demonstrates your dedication to supporting an exciting, highly functional, and deeply important effort to promote multicenter and international cooperation in ophthalmic oncology. Your gift today will save both vision and lives here in the USA and all over the world. With so much to look forward to, the ECF team hopes they can count on your support. Please consider making your gift to The Eye Cancer Foundation today, and be a crucial part in this fight against eye cancer by visiting **<http://eyecancercure.com/donate> or mailing your gift to 115 East 61st Street, Suite 5B New York, NY 10065.**



Paul T. Finger

