



**September 15, 2009. University of Washington Awarded Life Sciences Discovery Fund (LSDF) Funding to Advance Novel Artemisinin Technologies for Cancer Treatment in Collaboration with Artemisia BioMedical, Inc**

The University of Washington (Seattle, WA) was one of six Washington life science organizations to be awarded funding from the state's Life Sciences Discovery Fund (LSDF), it was announced today. In collaboration with Artemisia BioMedical, Inc, a research team under the leadership of Tomikazu Sasaki, PhD, will receive approximately \$1.5 million over three years to further advance their project entitled "Development of Artemisinin Compounds for Cancer Treatment".

The Life Sciences Discovery Fund Board of Trustees selected the awardees from among 61 proposals that were evaluated by national experts convened by the American Association for the Advancement of Science. In a highly competitive process, each proposal was rated on its scientific merit and its potential to improve health and healthcare in Washington and provide statewide economic returns. The Life Sciences Discovery Fund, a Washington state agency established in May 2005, makes grant investments in innovative life sciences research to benefit Washington and its citizens.

Artemisinin, derived from the plant *Artemisia annua*, is used to treat malaria and is sold as a botanical dietary supplement in the United States. In preclinical studies, novel artemisinin compounds have shown potent anti-cancer activities equivalent or superior to gold standard chemotherapy drugs, with virtually no side effects.

The University of Washington investigators will develop a new class of chemotherapeutic agents based on artemisinin drugs in collaboration with Artemisia BioMedical, Inc and test their efficacy initially in models of breast cancer. The new compounds will also be tested in dogs afflicted with lymphoma in collaboration with researchers at Washington State University. The new artemisinin drugs are expected to be efficacious, cost-effective and have few side effects. Ultimately, these drugs may be effective against chemotherapy-resistant cancers and offer promise as a breakthrough treatment for many types of human and animal cancer.

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