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Lurie Children's brain tumor researcher Amanda M. Saratsis receives prestigious Hartwell Foundation award

Funding will spur research to identify biomarkers to detect and treat pediatric brain cancers

Northwestern University researcher Amanda M. Saratsis, MD, who also is a Pediatric Neurosurgeon at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, is one of 12 individuals nationwide to receive the 2019 Hartwell Foundation Individual Biomedical Research Award. Dr. Saratsis was received funding for her proposed study, Epigenetic Signatures as Novel Biomarkers for Targeted Brain Cancer Treatment.

The Hartwell Award provides researchers with \$300,000 in direct cost support over three years for early-stage, innovative and cutting-edge biomedical research projects that have not yet qualified for significant funding from outside sources and have the potential to benefit U.S. children.

"I'm deeply honored to be a recipient of the Hartwell Foundation Individual Biomedical Research Award," said Dr. Saratsis, who is also an Assistant Professor in Neurological Surgery and Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. "This award also acknowledges the overall strength of Lurie Children's brain tumor program and the cutting-edge research environment here and at Northwestern."

Dr. Saratsis studies the biology of pediatric brain tumors, specifically diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma (DIPG), which has the highest mortality rate of all pediatric solid tumors, in order to identify and test novel molecular targets for more effective therapies. She recently developed a technique to detect a diagnostic tumor mutation in cerebrospinal fluid that is implicated in DIPG. As a Hartwell Individual Biomedical Researcher, she now proposes to apply the newest techniques in nucleic acid and protein analysis to identify

biomarkers in cerebrospinal fluid and apply precision treatments to the most common and deadly forms of pediatric brain cancer.

As part of the award, each recipient's nominating institution receives a Hartwell Fellowship, which provides a qualified early career stage postdoctoral researcher with direct cost support of \$50,000.

Northwestern University has had multiple winners of the Individual Biomedical Research Award since being chosen to participate in the annual competition seven years ago. Past winners include Lurie Children's researchers Arun Sharma, MD, Yongchao Ma, PhD, and Edward Gong, MD.

For further information about The Hartwell Foundation, see www.thehartwellfoundation.org.

Research at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago is conducted through the Stanley Manne Children's Research Institute. The Manne Research Institute is focused on improving child health, transforming pediatric medicine and ensuring healthier futures through the relentless pursuit of knowledge. Lurie Children's is ranked as one of the nation's top children's hospitals by *U.S. News & World Report*. It is the pediatric training ground for Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. Last year, the hospital served more than 220,000 children from 48 states and 49 countries.