Dr. Neville Sanjana Receives 2018 AAAS Martin and Rose Wachtel Cancer Research Award

NEW YORK, NY (March 23, 2018) – The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and *Science Translational Medicine* have selected Neville Sanjana, PhD, Core Faculty Member at the New York Genome Center, Assistant Professor of Biology, New York University, and Assistant Professor of Neuroscience and Physiology at NYU School of Medicine, for its prestigious 2018 AAAS Martin and Rose Wachtel Cancer Research Award. This annual award, which recognizes early-career investigators who have performed outstanding work in the field of cancer research, was funded in 2013 by an endowment established through a generous bequest from Martin L. Wachtel.

Dr. Sanjana is one of only two recipients honored this year. His essay detailing the prize-winning work will be published in *Science Translational Medicine* in the summer of 2018.

Dr. Sanjana's research focuses on better understanding the functional significance of different mutations in cancer and their impact on resistance to drug and immune therapies. In his lab, Dr. Sanjana develops new gene editing technologies to better understand how mutations both in protein-coding genes and in noncoding regions of the genome affect cancer evolution and therapeutic resistance. The data from these innovative functional genomic technologies, such as his recent two cell-type screen pairing immune cells with cancer cells carrying different mutations, can help predict in advance which tumors might not respond to immunotherapy.

"The easy programmability of CRISPR nucleases has made it possible to target thousands of different locations in the human genome in virtually any tumor or cell type. This transformative technology has empowered individual investigators to answer genome-scale questions without the difficulty of acquiring a large number of tumor biopsies," Dr. Sanjana said. His work over the past few years has included developing high-throughput gene editing approaches to elucidate key genes and noncoding elements involved in immunotherapy failure, in metastasis of a primary tumor to distal organs and in therapeutic resistance to inhibitors of BRAF, the most commonly mutated gene in melanoma.

"We are very proud that Dr. Sanjana's important research has been honored and recognized by this distinguished award," said Tom Maniatis, PhD, Scientific Director and Chief Executive Officer, New York Genome Center. "Insights gained from Dr. Sanjana's work have the potential to advance precision medicine and next-generation treatments for cancer."

In addition to having his essay published, as a recipient of the AAAS Martin and Rose Wachtel Cancer Research Award, Dr. Sanjana will receive a cash prize and present a public lecture on his research at an award ceremony to be held this summer at the National Institutes of Health.

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About the New York Genome Center

The New York Genome Center is an independent, nonprofit academic research institution at the forefront of transforming biomedical research with the mission of advancing clinical care. A collaboration of premier academic, medical and industry leaders across the globe, the New York Genome Center has as its goal translating genomic research into the development of new treatments, therapies and therapeutics against human disease. NYGC member organizations and partners are united in this unprecedented collaboration of technology, science and medicine, designed to harness the power of innovation and discoveries to advance genomic services. Their shared objective is the acceleration of medical genomics and precision medicine to benefit patients around the world. For more information, visit our website at http://www.nygenome.org.

Member institutions include: Albert Einstein College of Medicine, American Museum of Natural History, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, Columbia University, Hospital for Special Surgery, The Jackson Laboratory, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, The New York Stem Cell Foundation, New York University, Northwell Health, Princeton University, The Rockefeller University, Roswell Park Cancer Institute, Stony Brook University, Weill Cornell Medicine and IBM.

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