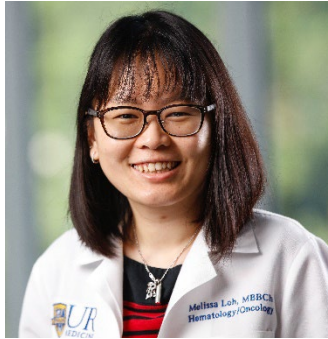


**Conquer Cancer – Walther Cancer Foundation  
Career Development Award in Palliative and Supportive Care in Oncology**

**Award Term:** 7/1/2022-6/30/2025

**Supported by:** Walther Cancer Foundation



**Kah Poh Loh, MBBCh BAO, MS**

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“A pilot randomized trial of a patient-centered communication tool for older patients with acute myeloid leukemia and their oncologists”

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**Layperson Summary**

Acute myeloid leukemia (AML) is the most common acute leukemia affecting older adults. Older adults have varying health status and medical problems. As a result, oncologists may have difficulty identifying older patients with AML who may benefit from treatment or experience excessive side effects from treatment. This may contribute to both over- and undertreatment of patients with AML, leading to poor outcomes in this population. Shared decision making helps oncologists and patients agree on a management plan. To achieve shared decision making, there is a need to ensure that 1) patients are informed of the disease and treatment options (including their risks and benefits), 2) patient values are incorporated into treatment decisions, and 3) patients are aware of their prognosis. Based on our prior work, we have found that many older adults with acute myeloid leukemia are not well informed about their disease, its treatment, and prognosis. While patient’s independence and memory can predict whether they can tolerate treatment, these are not systematically assessed by oncologists.

With feedback from older adults and oncologists, we have developed a communication tool (UR-GOAL) that may help facilitate shared decision making and communication between older adults with acute myeloid leukemia and their oncologists. This tool consists of: 1) A video on the basics of acute myeloid leukemia and its treatment; 2) Questions that assess patients’ health status (e.g., ability to manage medications), their values (e.g., do they prioritize maintaining their independence less, equally, or more so than living longer), preferences for information about prognosis, and their understanding of prognosis. We will recruit patients aged 60 and over who have a new diagnosis of acute myeloid

leukemia. Half of the patients will be assigned to use the communication tool and the other half will receive care as usual. This grant will allow us to determine if older patients with acute myeloid leukemia who are assigned to use the communication tool will report better shared decision making and communication with their oncologists compared to those who receive care as usual. These findings will have the direct potential to improve shared decision making and promote effective communication between older adults with acute myeloid leukemia and their oncologists.

### **Biography**

Dr. Loh is a geriatric hematologist with board certification in internal medicine, hematology, oncology, and geriatrics. Clinically, she specializes in caring for older adults with hematologic malignancies. Her research focuses on developing and implementing behavioral and supportive care interventions, utilizing digital health technologies, to improve outcomes for older adults with hematologic malignancies. Dr. Loh also studies the mechanisms by which behavioral and supportive care interventions improve outcomes. She has received several internal and external grants including the National Cancer Institute (NCI) K99/R00, Wilmot Cancer Institute (WCI) Research Fellowship Award, and Cancer and Aging Research Group (CARG) Pilot Award. Dr. Loh's other research interests include: 1) Treatment decision-making in acute myeloid leukemia, 2) End of life care in patients with hematologic malignancies, and 3) Prognostic understanding of older patients and their caregivers.

Locally at the Wilmot Cancer Institute at the University of Rochester Medical Center, she leads all geriatric hematology clinical and research efforts including building a de novo geriatric hematology consultative clinic, inspiring and helping to organize geriatric hematology clinical trials, and training local and international mentees. Dr. Loh has served or is serving on multiple national and international committees. These include the ASCO Annual Meeting Education Committee for Geriatric Oncology (Chair, 2020-2021), American Geriatrics Society Cancer and Aging Special Interest Group (Chair, 2021-2022), Junior Investigator Board and Junior Faculty Lead in the Analytics Core for the NIA-funded CARG R21/R33 infrastructure grant, ASH Committee on Education Affairs, and Young International Society of Geriatric Oncology interest group (Chair, 2020-2022). She has published over 130 peer-reviewed articles and presented over 100 oral and poster presentations.