



DR. SUNA GULAY FRENCH: From TTAP training to commercialization of innovative cancer treatments

National Cancer Institute



Dr. Suna Gulay French

Just two years after joining the Technology Transfer Ambassador Program (TTAP) at the National Cancer Institute (NCI), Suna Gulay French, PhD, is already an accomplished NCI technology transfer (T2) professional and a testament to the success of this training program and the NCI T2 fellowship.

Gulay French has managed diverse portfolios under NCI's Center for Cancer Research (CCR) and Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences (DCCPS), and she has assisted with multiple collaborative agreements to facilitate research and clinical trials on rare cancers and public health crises such as COVID-19 and HIV. Her work on biological materials

licenses and patent licenses has supported the use of NCI cell lines in drug evaluation and the development of T cell receptor technologies into novel cancer immunotherapies.

In early 2019, as a postdoctoral fellow at the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), Gulay French was accepted into TTAP, a yearlong hybrid T2 training program focused on invention analysis, commercialization and entrepreneurship. In this role, she assisted technology transfer managers within the NCI Technology Transfer Center (TTC) by reviewing specific NCI inventions for patent application, marketing and portfolio management purposes.

This experience led to a fellowship position at TTC in late 2019, which provided immense growth opportunities and introduced her to many esteemed mentors. She managed a diverse docket—two NCI laboratories within the CCR and the DCCPS—usually shared by two T2 fellows. During this time, she also started mentoring incoming TTAP trainees.

Seven months into her fellowship, Gulay French was hired as a full-time TTC employee, with a docket that includes the NCI CCR Surgical Oncology Program and the Laboratory of Cellular and Molecular Biology. She drafts and negotiates clinical research agreements—such as

human material transfer agreements, human data transfer agreements and collaborative research and development agreements (CRADAs)—that enable collaborations for rare endocrine and gastrointestinal cancers.

Gulay French is now working on an exclusive license for TP5, a small peptide therapeutic that can be used to treat many types of cancerous tumors.

One NCI invention managed by Gulay French is a small peptide therapeutic, TP5, that can be used to treat many types of cancerous tumors, including colorectal carcinoma and glioblastoma in the brain. Gulay French's marketing of this technology started when she was a TTAP ambassador and has continued throughout her work with NCI.

As a T2 fellow and full-time employee, she worked on slide decks explaining the TP5 technology for multiple events, including the 2020 NCI Technology Showcase. She also connected inventors with TTC's competitive Invention Development Program (IDP), under which TP5 has received funding and other assistance for preclinical development. Gulay French is now working on an exclusive license for this technology.

Meanwhile, she has continued her involvement with TTAP. As a volunteer TTAP lead, Gulay French coordinates interactions with the Johns Hopkins (JHU) Carey Business School Discovery-to-Market (D2M) MBA course; D2M students select inventions from the TTC's NCI and client institute dockets and analyze these inventions, providing TTC with additional valuable patenting and licensing information.☞