Metastatic breast cancer (MBC) is the most advanced stage (stage 4) of breast cancer where tumor cells have spread to other parts of the body such as the bones, liver, lungs or brain. Compared to the 99% relative breast cancer survival rate for stage 1 breast cancer, stage 4 breast cancer only has a 30% 5-year relative breast cancer survival rate.

MBC is difficult to treat; and while treatable, it is not curable at this time. For this reason, it is crucial that researchers gain a better understanding of the biology of breast cancer and metastasis to help develop drugs that will slow, stop and prevent metastatic spread of breast cancer.

In addition to supporting research, Komen is also a founding member of the Metastatic Breast Cancer Alliance, with more than 30 organizations working together to improve the lives and outcomes for those living with MBC.

Read how Komen-funded researcher Dr. Xiang Zhang's personal experience with breast cancer is shaping his fight against MBC in the lab here.

Our Research Investment:
(1982-2022)
More than $230 million in over 550 research grants and more than 60 clinical trials focused on MBC

What We’re Investigating

- Collecting samples from a large cohort of people with treatment-resistant MBC to identify better treatment strategies or new MBC treatment targets.
- Testing an exercise intervention for people with MBC to determine whether the addition of exercise to their care plan could improve long-term treatment outcomes.
- Testing if adding another drug to pembrolizumab treatment can increase response to treatment for patients with specific types of MBC.

WHAT WE’VE LEARNED from Komen-funded research

Tilmanocept (Lymphoseek), a novel FDA approved imaging method, can be used to more-effectively detect whether breast cancer has spread to the lymph nodes.

The presence of certain types of circulating tumor cells may be used as a biomarker to predict who is at high risk of metastasis and may serve a drug target to prevent MBC.

Learn about the Susan G. Komen Metastatic Breast Cancer (MBC) Collaborative Research Initiative, a unique effort that brings a collaborative team of experts together to discover breakthroughs in treatments for people with MBC here.