

## NBTF/TMF Caregiver Research Grant

### **Martin Klein, PhD**

*Maintaining health-related quality of life of caregivers of glioblastoma patients: a randomized, two-group, controlled trial*

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### Abstract

Glioblastoma multiforme (GBM) is the most frequently occurring and most aggressive type of malignant primary brain tumor. Despite intensive treatment with neurosurgery, radiotherapy, and chemotherapy, patients with this type of brain tumor invariably experience tumor recurrence. Median patient survival is approximately one year from initial diagnosis. Due to the awareness of the inevitable approaching death of their beloved as well as the fact that GBM patients often demonstrate behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dysfunction early in the course of their disease, caregivers of these patients often bear an incalculable emotional burden for their work. Exhaustion, financial strain, disrupted daily activities, and continuous caregiving contribute to significant mental health morbidity, including anxiety and depression, poor sleep, and even increased cancer risk. This study aims at 1) ascertaining GBM patients' caregiver mastery and burden and 2) determining to what extent a structured psychosocial intervention that teaches coping and problem-solving skills leads to clinically significant improvements in health-related quality of life (HRQOL) of the caregivers of GBM patients. Concerning the 2nd aim, three questions will be addressed: 1) does the intervention decrease emotional distress and augment HRQOL? 2) does the intervention improve problem-solving skills? and 3) does the effectiveness of the intervention depend on patient's HRQOL, tumor, and/or treatment characteristics?