

# **Tolera Therapeutics gets \$8 million from investors**

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A Cleveland Clinic spin-off that is developing safer immuno-suppression therapies for transplant and cancer patients has raised more than \$8 million in its first investment round.

The Clinic's commercialization unit, CCF Innovations, spun off Tolera Therapeutics Inc. in January 2007.

Tolera is working to commercialize therapies based on research done at the Clinic by Dr. Maria Siemionow, as well as at the University of Kentucky.

Triathlon Medical Ventures in Cincinnati led the investment group, which included the Southwest Michigan First Life Science Fund in Kalamazoo and Hopen Therapeutics Inc. in Grand Rapids, Mich.

"This funding affords us the opportunity to move quickly in advancing our novel therapeutic technologies," said John Puisis, Tolera's chief executive, in a written statement.

Suzette Dutch of Triathlon Medical Ventures, who has joined the Tolera board, said in the statement that the company has "a promising technology platform and a near-term product with human data evidencing key advantages in transplantation."

Since 2005, Dr. Siemionow has been director of plastic surgery research and head of microsurgery training in the Plastic Surgery Department of the Clinic.

In 2004, she became the first U.S. doctor to receive Institutional Review Board approval to transplant a face from a cadaver to a living human.

Siemionow, who is Tolera's chief medical officer, also has developed therapies that promote life-long acceptance of organ and tissue transplants while reducing or eliminating the need for immuno-suppression drugs and their dangerous side-effects.