

American Cancer Society Awards New Research and Training Grants

Nation's largest non-government, not-for-profit cancer research funder awards 87 grants totaling \$45,084,486 million in second of two cycles for 2016



ATLANTA – October 3, 2016– The American Cancer Society, the largest non-government, not-for-profit funding source of cancer research in the United States, has approved funding for 87 research and training grants totaling \$45,084,486 in the second of two grant cycles for 2016.

The grants will fund investigators at 64 institutions across the United States; 70 are new grants while 17 are renewals of previous grants. The grants go into effect January 1, 2017.

Highlights of the current cycle:

Anil K. Sood, MD of University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center has been awarded a five-year renewable Research Professorship to investigate the microenvironment inside tumor cells that allows them to block the immune system, which limits the effectiveness of promising new immune therapies. By identifying new targets, Dr. Sood and colleagues hope to aid the development of nano-medicine strategies to help deliver the body's own cancer-fighting immune system factors into tumors.

Three American Cancer Society Research Professors were renewed for 5 year terms. They are: **Cory Abate-Shen, PhD of Columbia University Medical Center, Iswar K. Hariharan, MBBS, PhD of the University of California, Berkeley, and Gregg L. Semenza, MD, PhD of Johns Hopkins University.**

Jason T. Huse, MD, PhD, of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer is investigating the molecular pathogenesis of malignant gliomas, a type of brain tumor that is incurable and lethal. Dr. Huse is elucidating epigenetic mechanisms that underlie the gene expression programs that make these tumors lethal.

Traci R. Lyons, PhD, University of Colorado, Denver will focus on how ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS) progresses to invasive cancer, a critical issue in breast cancer early detection. The research will help identify biomarkers for determining which patients should be recommended for aggressive treatments, in hopes of reducing over-treatment and improving outcomes for patients.

Lucia B. Jilaveanu, PhD, MD of Yale University will investigate the possible role of two tumor cell molecules, PLEKHA5 and/or CEACAM1, in the development of melanoma brain metastasis with the aim of aiding development of therapeutics. Melanoma patients with brain metastases currently have limited therapeutic options.

Miyeko D. Mana, PhD of Massachusetts Institute of Technology will investigate how a high fat diet might stimulate the rapidly renewing cells in the intestinal tract, and whether that mechanism is relevant to the development of intestinal tumors.

Cher Dallal, PhD University of Maryland, Baltimore will explore using the internet to transmit real-time digital images to urologists to help assess bladder cancer patients who live in rural areas or are uninsured and may have to travel long distances to receive care.

Candyce Kroenke, ScD, MPH Kaiser Foundation Research Institute will look at the social environment as a potential contributor to of racial disparities in the treatment of breast cancer.

University of Southern California – Led by Principal Investigator, **Christopher A. Haiman, ScD**, the University of Southern California is one of 14 sites nationwide that were awarded Institutional Research Grants (IRG). Through the IRG, which is a block grant, the Society partners with outstanding academic institutions to promote the development of junior faculty into independent cancer researchers. Over the next three years, USC will be able to distribute awards to 15 pilot projects to beginning investigators, including three pilot projects under the special interest award category on research focusing on childhood cancers.

Since 1946, the American Cancer Society has funded research and training of health professionals to investigate the causes, prevention, and early detection of cancer, as well as new treatments, cancer survivorship, and end of life support for patients and their families. In those 70 years, the American Cancer Society's extramural research grants program has devoted more than \$4.5 billion to cancer research and has funded 47 Nobel Prize winners.

The Council for Extramural Research also approved 88 grant applications for funding, totaling \$49,687,000 million that could not be funded due to budgetary constraints. These "pay-if" applications represent work that passed the Society's multi-disciplinary review process but are beyond the Society's current funding resources. They can be and often are subsidized by donors who wish to support research that would not otherwise be funded. In 2015, more than \$11 million in additional funding helped finance 34 "pay-if" applications.

For more information about the American Cancer Society Research Program, please visit <http://www.cancer.org/research>.

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