



## Hope Funds Fellow Valiente Cited for Brain Metastasis Work by Melanoma Research Alliance

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Newport, RI - July 7, 2017 - Dr. Manuel Valiente, a 2010 Hope Funds for Cancer Research fellow, has been named a recipient of the Young Investigator Award by the Melanoma Research Alliance (MRA), the largest private funder of melanoma research, for work on brain metastasis.

Dr. Valiente is Principal Investigator of the Valiente Lab's Brain Metastasis Group, which develops research projects on brain metastases at the Centro Nacional de Investigaciones Oncológicas (CNIO) in Madrid, Spain.

His team's research studies cancer cells that metastasize to the brain: "Our interest is to understand cancer, but also the brain's reaction to metastasis. We develop an integrated approach that allows studying several critical aspects of the biology with the ultimate goal of blocking the development and growth of brain metastases."

The MRA's Young Investigator program aims to attract early career scientists with novel ideas into melanoma research, thereby recruiting and supporting the next generation of melanoma researchers. Young Investigators are scientists within four years of their first academic faculty appointment.

Since its founding in 2007, MRA has committed \$88 million in funding in the areas of prevention, diagnosis, and treatment, with the majority of funding allocated for melanoma treatment.

"We are very pleased to learn of the MRA's recognition of Dr. Valiente's work," said Leah Rush Cann, Chair of the Executive Committee for the Hope Funds for Cancer Research. "This prestigious award is a significant milestone in his important work on brain metastasis."

Hope Funds was established with the immediate goal of supporting important cancer research in the most challenging and understudied cancers. The organization's founders believed that funding outstanding post-doctoral researchers was the most productive and cost effective way of achieving that goal, a hypothesis Ms. Cann said has proven correct.

"What we discovered along the way was that the Hope Funds fellowships have become a critical bridge for these outstanding scientists to remain focused on research at a time when research is extremely scarce," said Ms. Cann. "The fellowships not only support three years of research, but also help facilitate a lifetime of making discoveries."



Manuel Valiente, Ph.D, D.V.M. has a degree in Veterinary Medicine (1998-2003, Zaragoza) awarded with the Extraordinary Licensure Award and 2nd Spanish National Licensure Award. With an interest in the Central Nervous System and following a research internship, he pursued a PhD in Neuroscience (Institute of Neuroscience, 2005-2009). In the laboratory of Oscar Marín, he developed several projects to understand the principles that govern migration of neuronal precursors needed to establish functional circuits in the adult. His doctoral work produced seven publications in leading journals in the field and was awarded the Extraordinary Doctoral Award. To expand his scientific training while maintaining the nervous system as the main focus of his research, Dr. Valiente joined the laboratory of Joan Massagué (Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, 2010-2014) where he was interested on finding critical mediators of brain metastases

during the colonization of this organ. His previous experience in techniques used in Neuroscience and knowledge of brain biology enabled him to develop new approaches to answer this question. The most significant contributions during this period were the discovery of the molecular bases of the high inefficiency in the metastatic colonization of the brain and the identification of a cell adhesion molecule critical for vascular co-option. In 2015 Manuel established the Brain Metastasis Group at the CNIO where he leads a team of scientists whose goal is to discover critical aspects of the biology of brain metastasis that can be directed toward the development of new therapeutic opportunities.

#### About Hope Funds for Cancer Research

The Hope Funds for Cancer Research was formed in 2006 by a group of concerned individuals with experience in oncology, intellectual property law, investment banking, philanthropy, sociology, and the arts to establish a funding vehicle that would take a rational scientific, medical, and investment approach to granting money to the most interesting and promising research efforts to address the most difficult-to-treat cancers, including pancreatic, lung, liver, sarcomas, esophageal, brain, gastric, and ovarian cancers, and rare lymphomas, leukemias and MDS. These cancers are insidiously aggressive illnesses that kill most of their victims within months, even with aggressive chemotherapy. The Trustees of the Hope Funds for Cancer Research believe that funding research that could lead to breakthroughs in these areas and increase life expectancy in these types of cancers is at the core of our mission. The Hope Funds for Cancer Research is a 509 (a)(1) charity under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service's code. For additional information about the organization, please visit <http://www.Hope-Funds.org> or call 401-847-3286.

#### Hope Funds for Cancer Research: Advancing Innovative Research in Understudied Cancers

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