Hope Funds for Cancer Research

Press Release
For Immediate Release
Media Contact:
Arden Scura (401) 847-3286

Hope Funds for Cancer Research Announces 2015 Postdoctoral Fellows

NEWPORT, RI -- August 24, 2015 -- Hope Funds for Cancer Research, an organization dedicated to advancing research for the most difficult-to-treat cancers, announced today it has selected this year's recipients for its Hope Funds Postdoctoral Fellowships. The Hope Funds Fellowships reflect the organization's strong commitment to promoting scientific innovation.

"The 2015 class of Hope Funds for Cancer Research Fellows represent the very best of young talented cancer researchers. We believe their work will have a positive impact on our ability to understand and treat the most difficult and deadliest cancers," states Leah Rush Cann, Chair Executive Committee of the Board or Trustees of the Hope Funds for Cancer Research.

Applications for the fellowships came from the most prestigious research institutions and were reviewed by a global scientific study session comprised of key-opinion-leader scientists working in oncology. From more than two hundred applications, the Hope Funds selected its six 2015 Fellows: Brian J. Abraham, Ph.D., at the Whitehead Institute at MIT; Barbara Gruener, Ph.D., at Stanford University; Andrew Mullen, Ph.D., at the Whitehead Institute at MIT; Peter K. Nicholls, Ph.D., at the Whitehead Institute at MIT; Wen Tang, Ph.D., at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center; and Bernardo Tavora, Ph.D., at Rockefeller University. Each Fellow will receive $150,000 over three years to fund their research.

About the Fellows

Dr. Brian Abraham at the Whitehead Institute, in the laboratory of Richard Young, Ph.D. is researching mutations that may be the crucial ones that lead to cancer. His project addresses neuroblastomas, acute lymphoblastic leukemias, small cell lung cancers, triple-negative breast cancers, pancreatic adenocarcinomas and glioblastomas. Dr. Abraham received his B.S. in Medical Informatics and Information Technology from the Rochester Institute of Technology and his Ph.D. in Bioinformatics from Boston University. For more information on this project, Click Here

Dr. Barbara Gruener at Stanford University, in the laboratory of Monte Winslow, Ph.D. is researching the mechanisms that drive metastasis and has developed a platform allowing her to test many drugs all at the same time in the same mouse. Her project addresses pancreatic ductal adenocarcinomas. Dr. Gruener received her Masters in Molecular Medicine from Friedrich Alexander University in Erlangen, Nuremberg, Germany and her Ph.D, from Technical University Munich. For more information on this project, Click Here

Dr. Andrew Mullen at the Whitehead Institute, in the laboratory of David Sabatini, M.D., Ph.D., is using a technique known as CRISPR to systematically silence the function of 3,000 metabolic enzymes in 15 different multiple myeloma cell lines in addition to several normal lines to study the effect on cell proliferation in order to better understand multiple myeloma cells' unique ability to secrete extreme quantities of antibodies. Dr. Mullen believes this work could identify

novel metabolic liabilities that could be used to inform new treatments. Dr. Mullen received his B.A. in environmental science from Ithaca College, NY and his Ph.D. in Genetics and Development from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. For more infomation on this project, Click Here

Dr. Peter K. Nicholls at the Whitehead Institute, in the laboratory of David Page, M.D. is researching germ cells tumors of the reproductive tract. He is studying the process by which embryonic primordial germ cells (PGCs) - precursor cells to both eggs and sperm - undertake normal development. This project addresses germ cell tumors of the ovary, testis and the midline. Dr. Nicholls received his Bachelor of Biomedical Science from Monash University in Clayton, Australia with honors and his Doctorate of Philosophy in Biochemisty and Reproduction from Monash University and Prince Henry's Institute. Dr. Nicholls studied at Frontiers in Reproduction at Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole, MA. For more information on this project, Click Here

Dr. Wen Tang at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center, in the laboratory of Craig Mello, Ph.D. is researching argonaute (AGO) proteins and their small non-coding RNAs, particularly a highly conserved AGO clade, called PIWI. His research is focused on identifying and investigating key components in those pathways, as well as understanding how small RNAs provide heritable epigenetic signals that confer stable modes of gene expression. Dr. Tang received his from B.S. at Wuhan University in China and his Ph.D. from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, University of Kansas Medical Center and Stowers Institute for Medical Research. For more information on this project, Click Here

Dr. Bernardo Tavora at Rockefeller University, in the laboratory of Sohail Tavazoie, M.D., Ph.D. has developed an innovative approach that allows him to identify genes that are being expressed in vivo in the cells that form tumor blood vessels. He and his colleagues have found that microRNA expression is a key molecular mechanism that enables the growth of metastatic colonies in distant organs. This project addresses highly metastatic tumors including melanoma, breast and colon. Dr. Tavora received his "Licenciatura" in Biology (Equivalent to joint BS/MS degree) from the University of Lisbon, Portugal and his Ph.D. from Barts Cancer Institute, Queen Mary University of London, UK. For more information on this project, Click Here

About the Hope Funds Fellowships

The Hope Funds for Cancer Research supports research for highly innovative projects that challenge the traditional paradigms associated with understanding the causes, mechanisms, progression, disease markers, or risk factors of the most difficult-to-treat cancers. Hope Funds believes it is important to emphasize creative approaches to research and award grants to young scientists based on the following criteria: project innovation and originality; the significance and direct relevance of the research proposal; the project's approach and conceptual framework; the researcher's qualifications and those of his or her mentors; and the quality of the researcher's overall working environment. To learn about all Hope Funds Fellows visit: 2015 Fellows, 2014 Fellows, 2013 Fellows, 2012 Fellows, 2011 Fellows, 2010 Fellows, 2009 Fellows, 2008 Fellows

About the Hope Funds for Cancer Research

Hope Funds for Cancer Research was formed in 2006 by individuals with experience in science, medicine, intellectual property law, investment banking, philanthropy, sociology and the arts, who wanted to establish a funding vehicle that would take a rational scientific, medical and investment approach to awarding research grants. A strong emphasis is placed on identifying innovative and promising research efforts to address the most difficult-to-treat cancers, including pancreatic, lung, liver, sarcomas, esophageal, brain, gastric, ovary cancers, rare leukemias and lymphomas, and MDS. The Trustees of the Hope Funds for Cancer Research believe that funding innovative research that can lead to medical breakthroughs and increased life expectancy is the core of its mission. 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 www.hope-funds.org

We are extremely grateful for the support of our donors in 2014, whose contributions made the 2015 Fellowships possible. To view a list of these donors, visit our website at: http://www.hope-funds.org/giving/honor-roll-donors/

Hope Funds for Cancer Research is an independent and unaffiliated non-profit organization

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Hope Funds for Cancer Research | 174 Bellevue Avenue, Suite 208 | Newport | RI | 02840