



# Through Grants and Awards, SNM Advances Molecular Imaging

**M**olecular imaging promises to extend current knowledge about the pathogenesis of many diseases to new meaningful dimensions that can play a pivotal role in prolonging patient lives with quality and dignity. History suggests that advancing medicine is a science as well as an art and relies heavily on the skills of experienced and young scientists. During the recent annual meeting in Washington, DC, SNM highlighted a broad array of awards and novel research projects in molecular imaging. Among the research projects selected for awards were several promising studies initiated by young investigators. In each case, a team of independent experts carefully judged the projects for scientific merit and innovation that might advance the field of molecular imaging and contribute to the benefit of health care.

Projects such as “Three-helix-bundle ribosome display system for VEGFR2 imaging,” “PET molecular imaging of prostate cancer by targeting VPAC1 receptors,” and “Integration of imaging and genomics for characterization of cardiac stem cell therapy” were among the topics of the 8 winning pilot research grantees out of a total of 17 high-quality applications received. For student fellowships, the experts also identified projects such as “Correlating proteomic biomarkers with PET imaging for early diagnosis of inflammatory atherosclerotic disease in diabetic patients,” “The mighty mouse: ubiquitous expression of trifusion imaging multimodality (bioluminescence, fluorescence, and PET) reporter gene in transgenic mouse,” and “Noninvasive molecular imaging of IGF1R expression in experimental human breast cancer.” The quality of projects submitted was exceptionally high, and not all meritorious projects could be supported.

Through the Bench-to-Bedside molecular imaging campaign, SNM is determined to expand on these activities. The Molecular Imaging Center of Excellence (MICoE) Grants and Awards Task Force, which I head, has made several recommendations to the SNM board for new grants,

awards, and fellowships specifically designed to advance molecular imaging research and therapy. Some of the primary objectives of these new awards are to: (1) promote post-doctoral training in molecular imaging and provide opportunities to young physicians and scientists to develop competence in molecular imaging; (2) attract freshly graduated physicians and scientists into the field of molecular imaging; (3) encourage students, physicians, and scientists-in-training to attend and make presentations at SNM annual meetings; and (4) support physicians or scientists-in-training to perform research in molecular imaging. These awards will supplement the other distinguished awards offered by SNM, SNMTS, the Education and Research Foundation (ERF) for SNM, and the SNM councils and will encourage new talents to contribute to greater understanding of the genesis of diseases for improved diagnostic pathways and treatment.

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