

Awards Promote MI Research

I am pleased to report the winners of a number of new molecular imaging grants and awards presented in June at the Molecular Imaging Center of Excellence (MICoE) business meeting held June 16 during the SNM Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA. These awards were created as part of our very successful Bench to Bedside campaign and are funded by the Education and Research Foundation for SNM.

Joanas Hannestad, MD, PhD, Yale University School of Medicine, received the inaugural junior medical faculty research grant of \$100,000 over 2 y to support his work on neuroinflammation and depression during interferon- α treatment of hepatitis C.

Two postdoctoral Molecular Imaging Scholars, Vania Kenanova, PhD, University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), and Sepideh Shokouhi, PhD, Vanderbilt University (Nashville, TN), were awarded \$60,000 each over 2 y. Kenanova's research project is on a novel protein scaffold for targeted delivery of imaging or therapeutic agents. Shokouhi is working on estimation of plaque burden in Alzheimer's disease mouse models using SPECT imaging.

Two predoctoral Molecular Imaging Scholars will receive \$40,000 each over 2 y. Peter Demetri Olcott of Stanford University School of Medicine (CA) will investigate optically coupled pulse-width modulation PET detectors for combined whole-body clinical PET/MR systems. Hyo-Eun Carrie Bhang of the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions (Baltimore, MD) is developing a PEG-Prom-mediated imaging and therapeutic system for cancer.

We also presented awards for the best abstracts submitted to the Novel Approaches to Molecular Imaging track. The first-place award (\$600) went to Hui Wang, PhD, of Stanford for "Trafficking the fate of mesenchymal stem cells in vivo." Second place (\$400) was awarded to Liu Wei of UCLA, principal author of "Cell surface expression of an engineered antibody as a PET reporter gene for in vivo PET imaging." Chan Joo Yeom of Seoul National University College of Medicine (South Korea) received a runner-up award (\$200) for "Human NIS gene radiotherapy targeting for HIF-1 activated cancer cells."

Thirty travel grants of \$1,000 each were awarded to young researchers who presented molecular imaging abstracts at the 2008 annual meeting.

I want to congratulate the winners of all of these new awards and thank the reviewers and members of the MICoE Grants and Awards Task Force and the SNM Award Committee for their participation in this process.



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