First MICoE Young Investigator Award Winners

Three abstracts were selected for recognition as winners of the newly initiated Molecular Imaging Center of Excellence (MICoE) Young Investigator Awards at the SNM Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City, UT. Seven abstracts were selected for presentation at the Young Investigators (YI) Symposium on June 6, and winners were announced at the MICoE Business meeting the next day. Those recognized include: (1) First place: Hongguang Liu, PhD, from the Molecular Imaging Program at Stanford, Department of Radiology and Bio-X Program, Stanford University CA), for "Noninvasive molecular imaging of radioactive tracers using optical imaging techniques." (2) Second place: Ambros Beer, MD, from Nuclear Medicine, Technical University of Munich (Germany), for "Correlation of $\alpha_v\beta_3$ expression, glucose metabolism, and tissue diffusivity by multimodality MR and PET imaging in cancer patients." The runner-up was I-Chih Tan, PhD, from the Center for Molecular Imaging, The Brown Foundation Institute of Molecular Medicine, The University of Texas Health Science Center (Houston), for "NIR fluorescence imaging of response to therapy in normal and lymphedema subjects."

Other abstracts selected for presentation at the YI session were: "In vivo multiplexed optical imaging with radiation luminescence excited quantum dots," also presented by Liu; "Mesenchymal stem cell therapy for peripheral arterial disease: In vivo monitoring and tracking with noninvasive imaging" by Yingli Fu, PhD, from the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine (Baltimore, MD); "Near-infrared fluorescent imaging of prostate cancer using integrin $\alpha_2\beta_1$ targeted peptide probes" by Chiun-wei Huang, from the University of Southern California (Los Angeles); and "Development of an activatable fluorescent probe for specific imaging of MT1-MMP expression in tumors" by Takashi Temma, from the Graduate School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Kyoto University (Japan).

Outgoing MICoE President Henry VanBrocklin, PhD, and incoming President Carolyn J. Anderson, PhD, present Ambros Beer, MD, with the second place award.

Congratulations to these young investigators for their innovative work.

Next year all young researchers will have the opportunity to request that their abstract be considered for the Molecular Imaging Young Investigator Awards.

Craig Levin, PhD
Chair, MICoE Grants and Awards Task Force

Clinical applications in neurodegenerative disease are set to expand substantially—through better use of ^{18}F-FDG, through ^{18}F-amyloid ligands that I expect to be in clinical practice within 2 y, and through DAT ligands for SPECT that should be available very soon, with VMAT ligands for PET to follow.

I believe our field will play an evolving role in brain tumor management. Although the future is bright, clinical acceptance and routine utilization will depend on comparative effectiveness research. This has not yet been fully embraced by the molecular imaging community, but I am hopeful that in coming years, we will begin to see the results of this sort of research moving discovery into clinical practice.

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