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Wednesday, October 1, 2008



NEWS | SAN DIEGO

LIAl launches new division

Wednesday, October 1, 2008

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The La Jolla Institute for Allergy & Immunology have launched the Inflammation Biology Division to research how the body's immune system will become an important player in reducing heart disease.

Mitchell Kronenberg, Ph.D., LIAl president and scientific director, said the institute recruited Klaus Ley, M.D., one of the leading research experts in the field, to head the new division.

Ley said the immune system's role in heart disease is a relatively recent finding, with the first inklings of its importance discovered in the early 1980s. Prior to that time, scientists believed that atherosclerosis, a blockage in the arteries and the underlying cause of most heart problems, was due to plaque formation caused solely by cholesterol buildup.

Ley, an internationally recognized scientist who helped pioneer the scientific discipline of vascular immunology, which looks at novel immune-based approaches to heart disease, said inflammation caused by the immune system is also an important participant in plaque formation and weakening of the artery wall. As such, it offers a whole new therapeutic avenue for potential ways to combat heart disease.

Prior to joining the Institute, Ley was director of the Robert M. Berne Cardiovascular Research Center at the University of Virginia, where he oversaw the efforts of the center's faculty while also conducting his own research program. Ley was recently selected as the 2008 recipient of the prestigious Marie T. Bonazinga Research Award from the Society for Leukocyte Biology. Ley will receive the award in November in recognition for his work illuminating the basic cellular mechanisms underlying inflammation, particularly as it relates to heart disease.

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