

MPD Foundation Advances Research With New Grant Awards

MPD Foundation, founded by patients for patients, has recently announced 6 new grants for New Investigators and Established Investigators who are working in the area of Myeloproliferative Neoplasms.

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The MPD Foundation is pleased to announce the recipients of its Established Investigator and New Investigator grants for 2011. These awards follow an extensive proposal review process conducted by the MPD Foundation's Scientific Advisory Board as well as additional MPD experts who gave generously of their time and expertise.

\$150,000 Established Investigator Awards

The MPD Foundation awarded three \$150,000 Established Investigator Awards, each renewable for a second year if the investigators' first-year results show promise.

Dr. Shaoguang Li, at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, is trying to confirm the identification of the gene Alox5 as a target for the treatment of polycythemia vera, one of the three classic MPNs. Alox5 is a promising target, because its presence is essential for the development of a related blood disease, chronic myelogenous leukemia; its loss prevents the disease from developing.

Dr. Robert Kralovics, at the Center for Molecular Medicine, Austrian Academy of Science, is attempting to decipher the genetic complexity of myeloproliferative neoplasms through genome sequencing.

Dr. Benjamin Ebert and Dr. Ross Levine, at Harvard Medical School and Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, will use whole genome sequencing to identify variant forms of genes that contribute to MPD pathogenesis.

\$75,000 New Investigator Awards

The MPD Foundation also provides grants to new investigators with the primary goal of underwriting creative new research ideas, and a secondary goal of providing support and encouragement for them to devote their careers to research in the MPDs. These grants may also be renewed for a second year.

Dr. Toshiaki Kawakami, at the La Jolla Institute for Allergy and Immunology, is studying a series of genes whose absence in mice is known to cause tumors and myeloproliferative neoplasms. He hypothesizes that the same thing happens in humans, and if it does, the discovery could lead directly to new therapeutic targets for MPN drug development.

Dr. Wei Tong, at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, is trying to determine the ways in which a protein called LNK downregulates JAK signaling. JAK2 is basically an on-off switch whose malfunction is present in many MPNs. LNK normally regulates the JAK2 switch to prevent myeloproliferation; mutated versions fail to turn off the signaling.

Dr. Saghi Chaffari, at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine, is investigating a different signaling mechanism whose failure may be responsible for myeloproliferation. This is important because the JAK2 mutation is not present in all MPN patients; there must be at least one other mutation to account for those cases.

Each research project was selected for the direct impact it could have on patients, either in the short term or by opening new avenues for productive research in the future, and for its potential to leverage the Foundation's limited funds by producing, over time, benefits far exceeding the initial investment.

The MPD Foundation is dedicated to helping MPN patients live longer and enjoy a better quality of life, primarily by encouraging and funding new research into the causes and potential cures for the MPNs. Founded by patients, for patients, the MPD Foundation maintains strong relationships with top researchers, clinicians and biopharmaceutical companies to accelerate progress in the development of treatments and ultimately a cure for these diseases.

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The Leader in Funding MPD Research

The MPD Foundation funds innovative, accountable research that produces results for patients with [polycythemia vera](#), [essential thrombocythemia](#) and [myelofibrosis](#). Founded by patients, for patients, we have strong relationships with top researchers, clinicians and biopharmaceutical companies to ensure progress is being made to get us closer to a cure. Terms on every research grant are negotiated to maximize the dollars invested in actual research.

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