

News Release

News Release

Your Contact

Shikha Viridi 416.561.6276

Merck KGaA Darmstadt, Germany Announces Recipients of €1 Million Grant for Multiple Sclerosis Innovation at ECTRIMS 2017

- **Grant awarded across three research projects focused on prediction and defining characteristics of multiple sclerosis**
- **Investment of €5 million in Multiple Sclerosis research funding as awards mark fifth year**

Mississauga, ON, October 27, 2017 – Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, a leading science and technology company, operating as EMD Serono in North America, today announced recipients of the fifth annual Grant for Multiple Sclerosis Innovation (GMSI) during, the 7th Joint ECTRIMS-ECTRIMS Meeting, in Paris, France.

This year, 77 proposals from 25 countries were submitted, representing innovative research projects taking place across the globe. Three research teams, from Canada, Portugal and the United States, were selected to share the €1 million grant to support their research:

- *Immunosenescence as a predictor of MS progression:* Professor Catherine Larochelle and Professor Nathalie Arbour, Department of Neurosciences, Université de Montréal, Montréal, Canada;
- *Targeting multiple sclerosis immune- and psycho-pathophysiology by modulation of neuroinflammation; development of the S100B knockout model studies:* Professor Adelaide Fernandes, Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Lisbon, Portugal;
- *Defining Spatial Pattern and Surface Characteristics of Multiple Sclerosis and Non-Specific White Matter Lesions via 3-Dimensional Analysis and Machine Learning:* Professor Darin Okuda, Department of Neurology & Neurotherapeutics, UT Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, Texas.

“Merck KGaA Darmstadt, Germany is deeply committed to innovative science that improves the lives of patients living with severe diseases. Since its initiation, the

News Release

funding of early stage research projects such as the Grant for Multiple Sclerosis Innovation, has enabled talented and inspiring researchers to advance our understanding of how we predict, diagnose, treat and monitor progression of this disabling disease," said Steven Hildemann, Global Chief Medical Officer and Head of Global Patient Safety, at the biopharma business of Merck KGaA Darmstadt, Germany. "This year's Grant for Multiple Sclerosis Innovation winners exemplifies recent innovation with promising concepts in artificial intelligence , augmented diagnosis of multiple sclerosis, as well as sophisticated monitoring of disease progression, supporting caregivers and patients with multiple sclerosis in their hopes to continue to lead a normal life."

"Technology will continue to play an important role in how we support people living with MS," said Gaby Murphy, Managing Director, EMD Serono, Canada. "EMD Serono is committed to further innovation and research that enables us to drive education and increase the ability people with MS have to shape the care they receive."

The GMSI was launched in October 2012 with the aim of improving the understanding of multiple sclerosis (MS) for the ultimate benefit of those living with the disease. Previous recipients have studied molecular markers of MS, novel magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and positron emission tomography (PET) imaging and analysis techniques to detect and monitor the disease, and methods to reduce and repair nerve damage caused by inflammation in patients with MS.

News Release

The awards symposium was chaired by Professor David Bates, Emeritus Professor of Clinical Neurology, Royal Victoria Infirmary, UK, and a member of the GMSI Scientific Committee. During the symposium, Merck KGaA Darmstadt, Germany also announced the call for proposals for the 2018 GMSI. Up to €1million will be awarded to fund innovative research in MS, in topics that could include: MS pathogenesis; prediction of MS subtypes; predictive markers of treatment response; potential new treatments for MS; and, innovative patient support programs, mobile health devices or patient-reported outcomes.

More information about the GMSI can be found online at:

www.grantformultiplesclerosisinnovation.org.

In addition to the GMSI, Merck KGaA Darmstadt, Germany awards annually the Grant for Fertility Innovation, the Grant for Oncology Innovation and the Grant for Growth Innovation. To-date over 90 innovation winners have received, or been committed, grant funding for their projects.

To learn more about the variety of innovation grants Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany offers, visit: <https://www.emdgroup.com/en/research/open-innovation/grants-and-awards.html>

About Multiple Sclerosis

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a chronic, inflammatory condition of the central nervous system and is the most common, non-traumatic, disabling neurological disease in young adults. It is estimated that approximately 2.3 million people have MS worldwide, with an estimated 100,000 in Canada. While symptoms can vary, the most common symptoms of MS include blurred vision, numbness or tingling in the limbs and problems with strength and coordination. The relapsing forms of MS are the most common.

About Merck KGaA Darmstadt, Germany

Merck KGaA Darmstadt, Germany is a leading science and technology company in healthcare, life science and performance materials. Around 50,000 employees work to further develop technologies that improve and enhance life – from biopharmaceutical therapies to treat cancer or multiple sclerosis, cutting-edge systems for scientific research and production, to liquid crystals for smartphones and LCD televisions. In 2016, Merck KGaA Darmstadt, Germany generated sales of € 15.0 billion in 66 countries.

Founded in 1668, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany is the world's oldest pharmaceutical and chemical company. The founding family remains the majority owner of the publicly listed corporate group. Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany holds the global rights to the Merck name and brand. The only exceptions are the United States and Canada, where the company operates as EMD Serono, MilliporeSigma and EMD Performance Materials.

News Release

About EMD Serono, Canada

EMD Serono, Canada, is the Canadian biopharmaceutical business of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany. EMD Serono, Canada has integrated cutting-edge science, innovative products and devices, and industry-leading patient support and access programs. EMD Serono, Canada has deep expertise in neurology, fertility and endocrinology, as well as a robust pipeline of potential therapies in neurology, oncology, immunology and immuno-oncology. Today, EMD Serono, Canada has more than 100 employees across Canada with headquarters in Mississauga, Ontario.