

MI Grants Fuel Advances in Molecular Imaging Research

The Grants and Awards Task Force oversees SNM's Molecular Imaging Center of Excellence (MICoE) program to encourage innovation and research in molecular imaging. This year 2 major research grants, funded by SNM's Education and Research Foundation, and 3 abstract awards, funded by the MICoE, were presented to recognize and support the work of promising young researchers.

The Molecular Imaging Research Grant for Junior Medical Faculty was presented to Laura L. Horky, MD, PhD, of Brigham and Women's Hospital (Boston, MA) to support her research using ^{18}F -FLT PET and ^{18}F -FET PET for early assessment of glioblastoma multiforme—the most common and aggressive type of brain tumor. This grant provides \$100,000 over 2 y to support 1 junior faculty member in an academic research setting engaging in molecular imaging research for diagnostic or therapeutic applications.

The Postdoctoral Molecular Imaging Scholar Grant was presented to Changqing Li, PhD, of the University of California, Davis, to support research into the simultaneous use of PET and optical imaging, which holds promise for advancing understanding of the cellular and molecular mechanisms of certain diseases. This award provides \$60,000 over 2 y in support of a postdoctoral fellow to promote integration of molecular imaging into his or her research activity.

Three 2009 SNM Molecular Imaging Young Investigator Awards were presented by MICoE President Henry VanBrocklin, PhD, at the MICoE business meeting on July 15 at the SNM Annual Meeting in Toronto.

Jolanta Kunikowska of the Medical University of Warsaw (Poland) was awarded first place and \$1,000 for her abstract, "Clinical results of PRRT with ^{90}Y -DOTATATE and $^{90}\text{Y}/^{177}\text{Lu}$ -DOTATATE: What is better for therapy?" Takahiro Higuchi, MD, PhD, of Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore, MD) received second place and a \$500 award for "Assessment of regional myocardial angiotensin II receptor upregulation after myocardial infarction by PET." Antti Saraste, MD, PhD, Technical University of Munich (Germany) received a \$250 award for " ^{18}F -Galacto-RGD detects anti-inflammatory effect of dietary intervention on mouse atherosclerotic lesions."

The MICoE Grants and Awards Task Force congratulates these award winners, whose research goals are to create new tools and methodologies for understanding diseases at their most fundamental cellular and molecular levels. The hope is that by supporting this type of research, MICoE will facilitate developments toward such ambitious goals as identifying and treating illness before it causes symptoms, tailoring therapy to each patient's specific disease profile, and curing the most intractable diseases. These are exciting and promising times for molecular imaging, but difficult challenges are ahead.

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standardization of imaging in clinical trials and should lead to an expansion of our methodology in assessing response to therapy, particularly in early-phase clinical trials. It should also help speed the approval of new radiopharmaceuticals.

The year ahead will surely bring many challenges to the practice of nuclear medicine. SNM's strategic plan should

be viewed as a roadmap that can help lead the profession to continued success. With your help, SNM will be able to build on past accomplishments and ensure that molecular imaging and nuclear medicine flourish well into the future.

*Michael Graham, MD, PhD
SNM President*