

McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine awards over half a million dollars in research grants

TORONTO, ON (November 6, 2007) – The McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine announced today that it is awarding \$600,000 in grants to support leading-edge research in the field of stem cells and regenerative medicine.

The grants will support the work of four young scientists pursuing post-doctoral research in the labs of McEwen Scientists in Toronto. Each post-doctoral fellowship grant, selected through a competitive review by an expert panel, provides \$150,000 in support over three years.

Award recipients will be working to generate advances in several areas:

- Dr. Laurent Balenci (PhD, INSERM, France), will be evaluating the regenerative potential of retinal stem cells (which develop into the retina of the eye) with the hope of generating findings that could eventually lead to new treatments for blindness. Dr. Balenci will be working in the laboratory of Dr. Derek van der Kooy at the University of Toronto.
- Dr. Yakov Lapitsky (PhD, University of Delaware) will be developing new tools to activate neural stem cells (stem cells of the nervous system), to help restore nerve function after stroke. Dr. Lapitsky will be working in the laboratory of Dr. Molly Shoichet at the University of Toronto.
- Dr. Christopher Sturgeon (PhD, University of British Columbia) will be studying the process of generating blood and heart cells from mouse embryonic stem cells. The work could ultimately provide an abundant supply of these cells for therapeutic testing. Dr. Sturgeon will be working in the laboratory of Dr. Gordon Keller at University Health Network.
- Dr. Erica Nieuwenhuis (PhD, University of Toronto) will be characterizing dermal stem cells (which develop into skin cells) to understand their potential to regenerate or replace damaged skin. Dr. Nieuwenhuis will be working in the laboratory of Dr. Freda Miller at the Hospital for Sick Children.

“Supporting the next generation of young scientists is absolutely critical to driving advances in our field, and one of the central goals of the McEwen Centre,” says Dr. Gordon Keller, Director of the McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine.

The four postdoctoral fellowships are supported by donations from Michael and Nancy McMurrich and the St. George’s Society of Toronto.

About the McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine

The McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine was founded with generous donations from Rob and Cheryl McEwen, totalling \$20 million since 2003. The McEwen Centre's mission is to be a catalyst for regenerative medicine by facilitating collaboration, supporting research, and promoting awareness of the field. The Centre includes 15 scientists at five Toronto hospitals and the University of Toronto, working to accelerate the development of more effective treatments for conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, respiratory disease and spinal cord injury. The McEwen Centre is supported by philanthropic contributions and research grants, and is based at University Health Network in Toronto, Canada. For more information, visit www.mcewencentre.com.

About University Health Network

University Health Network includes Toronto General, Toronto Western and Princess Margaret Hospitals and their research institutes and centres. The scope of research and complexity of cases at University Health Network has made it a national and international source for discovery, education and patient care. It has the largest hospital-based research program in Canada, with major research in cardiology, transplantation, neuroscience, oncology, surgical innovation, infectious diseases, and regenerative medicine. University Health Network is a research and teaching hospital affiliated with the University of Toronto.

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Media Contact

Fiona Hill
Senior Public Affairs Advisor
University Health Network
416-340-4800, ext. 4011
fiona.hill@uhn.on.ca