Chairman's Note

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the ENTELLIGENCE Spotlight! This newsletter is designed to highlight some of the important people and events in our Young Investigators Award (YIA) Program. Besides providing more information to the pulmonary vascular community, the Spotlight may also provide insight into the application process for interested researchers. Heading into its 7th year, the independent ENTELLIGENCE program, underwritten by generous support from Actelion, has provided grant awards for pulmonary vascular disease research to 34 young investigators from around the United States and Canada, and has resulted in 23 presentations at scientific congresses, 8 peer-reviewed manuscripts, 6 published abstracts, and 1 book chapter.

In 2011, four more grants were awarded. In this issue, we interview a recent YIA winner, Dr. Yon K. Sung from Stanford University. Because the mentoring aspect of the research is so critical to overall success, we’ve also spoken with her mentor, Dr. Mark Nicolls, to provide his perspective on his mentoring role in this research project. Finally, we’ve reached out to a 2010 YIA winner, Dr. Angela V. Ghatnekar, from the Medical University of South Carolina.

I hope you enjoy reading about their activities and perspectives. On behalf of the ENTELLIGENCE Steering Committee, for those who applied for the 2012 YIA, I look forward to your submissions!

Warm regards,

Angela V. Ghatnekar, PhD

Dr. Ghatnekar is a 2010 Young Investigators Award Program winner for her project, The Role of GATA-6 in Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension. Dr. Ghatnekar is a Postdoctoral Scholar at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, South Carolina. Spotlight caught up with her recently for an update on her project.

Spotlight: How did you hear about the Award Program?

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Yon K. Sung, MD, 2011 YIA Winner

Dr. Sung, a Post Doctoral Fellow and Clinical Instructor in Medicine in the Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine Division at Stanford University School of Medicine in Palo Alto, California, is one of this year's ENTELLIGENCE Young Investigators Award Program winners. Spotlight asked Dr. Sung about her upcoming work on the winning project, titled: The Role of Antibodies in the Pathogenesis of Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension.

Spotlight: How does the process of applying for the ENTELLIGENCE award compare with other grant applications?

Dr. S: The ENTELLIGENCE award process is very straightforward compared to other grant applications, which often require so many pieces of paper prior to submission that you can lose focus on what's important. I had applied for the ENTELLIGENCE award in 2010 and was turned down, but using the suggestions made by the grant committee, I was able to successfully revise my application for 2011.

Spotlight: What is the biggest reward associated with winning the ENTELLIGENCE award?

Dr. S: Receiving the ENTELLIGENCE award is very rewarding. The grant/research work is very competitive and it can be disappointing. I found it refreshing to see that my research is appreciated as important and interesting. Additionally, as a clinician, it is very helpful to have the funds needed to support my learning new research skills and laboratory techniques.

Spotlight: What role will your mentor, Dr. Nicolls, play in your investigation?

Dr. S: Dr. Nicolls is the brainchild behind this project, which is based, in part, on his prior work. He's been an amazing advisor. When I generate data, we meet and talk about it. He helps me interpret the results and decide on the most appropriate next steps.

Spotlight: What are some of the areas that you will be studying?

Dr. S: Data show that the presence of auto-antibodies increases the risk of developing pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH). We've hypothesized that the antibodies themselves can be pathogenic by attaching to the endothelium or some other part of the pulmonary vasculature and triggering other inflammatory mediators, which can cause vascular damage. We will be looking into the roles of the antibodies themselves in this process.

Spotlight: What are your goals in relation to this project beyond the ENTELLIGENCE award itself?

Dr. S: Our group is always interested in how the immune system is involved in the pathogenesis of PAH. My project addresses a small portion of that question. I’ve proposed 2 fairly straightforward aims that are big, interesting, and important questions and I plan to continue working on them beyond this project.

Mark Nicolls, MD (continued from page 2)

Dr. Nicolls is Associate Professor of Medicine and Chief, Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine at Stanford University School of Medicine in Palo Alto, California. Dr. Nicolls is the ENTELLIGENCE Young Investigator Award Program mentor of Yon K. Sung, MD, one of the 2011 winners.

Project Title: The Role of Antibodies in the Pathogenesis of Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension

Spotlight: What is the importance of the ENTELLIGENCE award for Dr. Sung?

Dr. N: She’s a clinical investigator and it’s very difficult now, with the state of NIH funding, to pursue biomedical disease research careers, especially in a clinically demanding field like pulmonary and critical care medicine. It can be hard to elicit MDs, especially women who may be looking to raise a family, into research. This type of grant is very helpful and the Award Luncheon (for the 2011 ENTELLIGENCE winners) meant a lot to Yon.

Spotlight: What role do you anticipate playing in mentoring Dr. Sung during her investigations?

Dr. N: I see this as a mechanism for providing support to Yon. She is in my laboratory, I’ve helped her get onto a good project, and I’ll eventually help her transition to independence.

Spotlight: What was the most rewarding experience you have had so far while mentoring Dr. Sung?

Dr. N: I’ve been incredibly impressed with Yon’s writing ability – she is one of the best writers I’ve ever worked with. She has a very clear, technical, academic background, I love her enthusiasm, and I’ve been very impressed with her very clear writing style, which is one of the most important qualities of any successful academician.

Spotlight: What is the strongest aspect of her grant, from your perspective?

Dr. N: The mainstay of treating pulmonary arterial hypertension, at least for now, is to try to prevent this process and we’re coming at this from a different perspective, which is that inappropriate inflammation may be the cause of the vascular disease.

Mark Nicolls, MD (continued from page 2)

(PAH) focuses on vasodilation and we’re coming to this from a different perspective, which is that inappropriate inflammation may be the cause of the vascular disease. Yon has a strong animal model that’s tied to this ongoing human study. It’s a very translational model because it will tell us a lot about how antibodies may or may not lead to propagation of the disease and how directive therapy might be most useful in preventing or treating active disease.

2012 PULMONARY VASCULAR DISEASE CONFERENCES

American College of Cardiology
ACC.12
Chicago, IL
March 24–27, 2012
http://www.accscientificsession.org/Pages/home.aspx

International Society for Heart & Lung Transplantation
32nd Annual Meeting & Scientific Sessions
Prague, Czech Republic
April 18–21, 2012
http://www.isHLT.org/meetings/annualMeeting.asp

American Thoracic Society
ATS® • 2012 International Conference
San Francisco, CA
May 18–23, 2012
http://conference.thoracic.org/2012

European Society of Cardiology
ESC Congress 2012
Munich, Germany
http://www.escardio.org/congresses/esc-2012/Pages/welcome.aspx

European Respiratory Society
ERS Annual Congress
Vienna, Austria
September 1–5, 2012
http://www.ersnet.org/

Steering Committee Update

Thank You

to our previous member, Jocelyn Dupuis, MD, PhD

University of Montreal

Welcome

to our new member, Evangelos D. Michelakis, MD
University of Alberta
**2011 Award Winners**

Yon K. Sung, MD  
Stanford University  
Salah Najm, MD  
Case Medical Center  
Marco Mura, MD, PhD  
University of Toronto  
Jana Bagarova, PhD  
Harvard Medical School

**ENTELLIGENCE Young Investigator Award Program Timeline**

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<tr>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sept</strong></td>
<td><strong>Oct</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Letter of intent (LOI) submission</td>
<td>Sept 26 – Nov 14, 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>LOI review</td>
<td>Nov 16 – Dec 14, 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant submission</td>
<td>Dec 19, 2011 – Feb 2, 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant review</td>
<td>Feb 6 – 27, 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Selection meeting</td>
<td>Mar 5, 2012</td>
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<td>Notify applicants</td>
<td>Mar 26, 2012</td>
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