

## Research projects selected for grants

The first cross European IBD research grant program from a patients perspective has become a reality. Three innovative research projects are selected to be awarded a grant of five thousand euro by the IBD Research Foundation. The applications were assessed by peer reviewers as well as patient representatives. The patient representatives made the final choice which applications to award a grant.

This year the IBD Research Foundation launched its first grant program, by providing grants for IBD related research projects. In order to use the foundation resources as effective as possible, we choose to provide three grants of five thousand euro each, for innovative projects in basic science or clinical research. At the deadline for submission of the grant applications, we were very pleased to have received eight applications for highly interesting research projects.

Every application qualified for our terms of submission so they could be submitted to our two assessment committees: the Scientific review committee and the Patient representatives committee. The scientific review committee consisted of seven peer reviewers from across Europe. Each of them has an outstanding reputation

in his/her area of expertise and we highly appreciated their efforts to assess the applications according to the assessment matrix.



*Rod Mitchell - Chairman*

The patient representatives committee consisted of three representatives from EFCCA and three representatives from the IBD Research Foundation. The objective of this committee was to assess the applications, taking into consideration the outcome of the Scientific review committee and to choose which applications are to be awarded a grant.

Although the input from the Scientific Review committee was absolutely crucial for the patient representatives committee to make a considered decision, the final choice was up to the patient representatives committee. This ensured the patient perspective to awarding the research grants, which is one of the key principles of the IBD Research Foundation. After all, the grants were funded by donations of individual patients and patient associations.

Since we could not know in advance how many applications we would receive or how complex the applications would be, it was difficult to estimate how long it would take to finish the reviews. Each application was carefully grounded and sometimes very

comprehensive. Both committees were dedicated to assess the applications extremely careful and thorough, keeping in mind their responsibility towards spending the foundation funds as effectively as possible. It took the patient representatives committee two Skype meetings and two weeks extra time to come up with final conclusion which was supported by everyone.

We highly appreciate this joint effort with our friends from EFCCA. Awarding the very first grant of the IBD Research Foundation, is an important milestone for the foundation. Yet we only made our first steps on the road of our “quest for the cure”! There is still a long journey to go, but these first steps provide confidence to proceed.

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## Selected grant applications

Each of the applicants has been informed about the results of the assessments. The applicants who were selected to be awarded a grant, will be sent an agreement very shortly in which the conditions for receiving the grants are set. As soon as we receive a signed copy of the agreements, the actual grant will be made available.

One of these conditions is to provide a summary about the project, which explains the essence of the project in a way which is understandable for non-experts. Of course we will publish those summaries as soon as we receive them.



*Dr. Hajnalka Szabo - Board member*

Please find below which grant applications were selected to be awarded a grant (in no particular order)





<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Stefania Vetrano, Bsc</b>  Laboratory of Immunology and Inflammation Istituto Clinico Humanitas 20089, Rozzano, Italy  Letter of support by: Silvio Danese, MD, PhD HEAD, IBD Unit Division of Gastroenterology Istituto Clinico Humanitas-IRCCS in Gastroenterology, Milan  Francis J. Castellino; Kleiderer-Pezold Professor of Biochemistry Director, W.M. Keck Center for Transgene Research
<b>Project title</b>	<b>The protein C pathway: a novel mediator in intestinal homeostasis in IBD</b>
<b>Aim</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Study the expression and function of the protein C pathway in human IBD</li><li>2. Investigate the functional role of the protein C pathway in mediating epithelial homeostasis in a dendritic cell-dependent manner</li></ol>
<b>Main questions to be answered</b>	We propose to investigate the following central hypothesis: The protein C pathway is expressed by DC and epithelial cells, and mediates a novel cell-cell cross-talk that is necessary for intestinal homeostasis





Applicant	<p><b>Prof. Giulio G. Muccioli, PhD</b></p> <p>Bioanalysis and Pharmacology of Bioactive Lipids lab Louvain Drug Research Institute Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium</p> <p>Letter of support by: Prof. M.P. Mingeot - LeClercq; president Louvain Drug Research Institute; Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium</p>
Project title	<p><b>Exploring the potential of N-palmitoylethanolamine in a mouse model of inflammatory bowel diseases</b></p>
Aim	<p>We aim to study the potential anti-inflammatory properties of PEA in an animal model of colitis, in treating colon inflammation as well as the colitis-related LPS induced systemic inflammation.</p>
Main questions to be answered	<p>In this grant application we propose to explore the potential anti-inflammatory properties of the Nacylethanolamines, and more specifically of N-palmitoylethanolamine, in treating colon inflammation and the related systemic inflammation found during colitis.</p>





<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Dr. Jessica Mwinyi</b>  Division of Clinical Pharmacology and Toxicology UniversitätsSpital Zürich Rämistrasse 100 8091 Zürich  Letter of support by: Prof. Gerd Kullak-Ublick; UniversitätsSpital Zürich Klinik für Klinische Pharmakologie und Toxikologie
<b>Project title</b>	<b>Analysis of PPAR-<math>\gamma</math> haplotype structure and its influence on disease susceptibility, pathogenesis and activity of inflammatory bowel disease</b>
<b>Aim</b>	Our aim is, to comprehensively determine PPAR- $\gamma$ gene variants by sequencing all seven NR1C3 exons which code for the most common PPAR- $\gamma$ splice variant PPAR- $\gamma$ 2 and the first 50 bp of the neighbouring intronic regions in 300 IBD patients and compare the sequencing outcome with the sequencing results obtained in 200 non-IBD subjects.
<b>Main questions to be answered</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Is there a difference in SNP composition and frequency in IBD patients compared to non-IBD control subjects? Is it possible to detect specific PPAR-<math>\gamma</math> gene variants as putative susceptibility markers for IBD?</li><li>2. Do differences in SNP/haplotype composition and frequencies occur between CD patients and UC patients, which would indirectly support the hypothesis of a different pathogenesis?</li><li>3. Are there any novel variants of functional relevance within the PPAR-<math>\gamma</math> gene detectable, which could further explain the mechanisms behind the inflammatory processes observed in IBD patients?</li></ol>

## Patient representatives committee

The Patient Representatives Committee consisted of:

- Mr. Ben Wilson (United Kingdom); Board member of EFCCA (Treasurer)
- Mrs. Elisabeth Lattimore (Ireland); Representative at EFCCA from the Irish Society for Colitis and Crohn's disease
- Mrs. Marika Armilo (Finland); Board member of EFCCA (Vice chairman) and representative at EFCCA for the Finnish association for people with Crohn's disease or Ulcerative colitis.
- Mr. Bruno Raffa (Switzerland); Board member of the IBD Research Foundation (Treasurer)
- Mr. Rod Mitchell (United Kingdom); Board member of the IBD Research Foundation (Chairman)
- Mr. Wouter Miedema (The Netherlands); Board member of the IBD Research Foundation (Secretary)

## Next...

The success of our first research grant program inspired us to start the next program. Among other things we have to determine how many grants we would like to make available and which amount of money should be involved. As we wish to represent the voice of people with IBD, we will also think about how we can represent the patients perspective best. Eventually our aim is to improve IBD treatment.

In order to continue our initiatives for improvement of IBD treatment, we require help. For example by providing publicity for our foundation. We also simply require donations, which are the bases of our funding possibilities. If you have ideas how to help the IBD Research Foundation,

please contact the secretary at [Wouter.miedema@ibdresearch.org](mailto:Wouter.miedema@ibdresearch.org) .



*Mrs. Marika Armilo and Mrs. Heli Parjanen of the Finnish IBD patients association, selling IBD Research foundation caps.*



## Help find the cure, donate today!

Donations can be made either through the website ([www.ibdresearch.org](http://www.ibdresearch.org)) using a credit card, or through a transfer on our bank account: ABN AMRO Bank the Netherlands

Account number: 97.46.86.158

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*Please note that our Bank name, IBAN and BIC codes have recently changed!*

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