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Kenneth Rainin Foundation Continues Major Investments in IBD Research, Awards First Grants for Diet and Nutrition-Related Projects

Foundation awards \$2.9 million for cutting-edge research for Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)

Oakland, Calif. – The Kenneth Rainin Foundation announced today that it has awarded \$2.9 million for Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) research including, for the first time, projects that investigate the impact of diet and nutrition on IBD in humans. Grantees were selected from a competitive, international pool of applicants for projects that demonstrate the potential to yield transformative discoveries and create major new insights about IBD.

“There is an inherent element of risk when scientists introduce innovative projects and creative ideas for research. Our grants underscore our commitment to investing early in novel approaches, and our belief that collaboration among investigators and across disciplines can have the greatest impact in research,” said Dr. Jennifer Rainin, CEO of the Kenneth Rainin Foundation. “We remain more focused than ever on the big picture: Finding a cure for IBD.”

The Foundation’s three health grant programs—Innovator Awards, Synergy Awards and Breakthrough Awards—offer support for a range of scientific and clinical research projects that are typically not eligible for funding from more traditional sources due to their ground-breaking, pioneering nature.

“We’re broadening and expanding our portfolio of research projects, and for the first time awarded funding for projects that focus on diet and nutrition,” said Dr. Averil Ma, chair of the Rainin Foundation’s Scientific Advisory Board and Chief of Gastroenterology at the University of California, San Francisco. “Patients with IBD can be quite sensitive to changes in their diets, and we want to encourage more research in this area to better understand when and how diet changes the course of IBD.”

Three diet and nutrition-related projects received grants through the Foundation’s [Innovator Awards](#), which fund proof of principle research projects.

“The role of diet in IBD is a profoundly under-researched area. This Innovator Award will allow us, for the first time, to assess whether specific dietary changes alter the gut bacteria and inflammation in people with IBD, and importantly whether their gut symptoms and quality of life improve,” said Kevin Whelan, Professor of Dietetics at King’s College London.

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The Innovator Awards for 2015 include:

- **Mohamed Abou Donia, PhD**, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ
- **Michel Bagnat, PhD**, Duke University, Durham, NC
- **Gregory Barton, PhD**, University of California, Berkeley
- **Lars Bode, PhD**, University of California, San Diego
- **Iliyan Iliev, PhD**, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles, CA
- **Kate Jeffrey, PhD**, Massachusetts General Hospital Research Institute, Boston, MA
- **Dan Littman, MD, PhD**, New York University, New York, NY
- **Timothy Lu, MD, PhD**, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston, MA
- **Gabriel Rabinovich, PhD**, Fundacion Instituto de Biologia y Medicina Experimental, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- **David Suskind, MD**, Seattle Children's Hospital, Seattle, WA
- **Kevin Whelan, PhD**, King's College London, London UK

The Foundation's [Synergy Awards](#) fund groundbreaking projects and encourage investigators with differing areas of expertise to pool their talents and resources toward a research goal that would not be possible if the investigators worked independently. It is open exclusively to attendees of the Foundation's annual Innovations Symposium.

"The Synergy Award is a unique opportunity for our group to join efforts with Dr. Stephen Hanauer, a leader in clinical aspects of IBD, and pursue a novel idea for understanding this disease and potential therapies for treatment," said Thea Tlsty, Professor, Department of Pathology at the University of California, San Francisco. "We are excited and grateful for this opportunity and hope that we can contribute to the broader understanding of IBD."

Three teams of scientists were selected for this year's Synergy Awards.

- **Eugene Chang, MD**, University of Chicago, Illinois; and **Stephen Hanauer, MD**, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL
- **Thea Tlsty, PhD**, University of California, San Francisco; **Stephen Hanauer, MD**, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL; and **Scott VandenBerg, MD, PhD**, University of California, San Francisco
- **Richard Maizels, PhD**, University of Edinburgh, Scotland; **Megan Levings, PhD**, University of British Columbia; and **Steven Ziegler, PhD**, Benaroya Research Institute, Seattle, WA

The Foundation's [Breakthrough Awards](#) provide multi-year funding to Innovator Award grantees who have demonstrated significant progress in advancing their original research hypotheses.

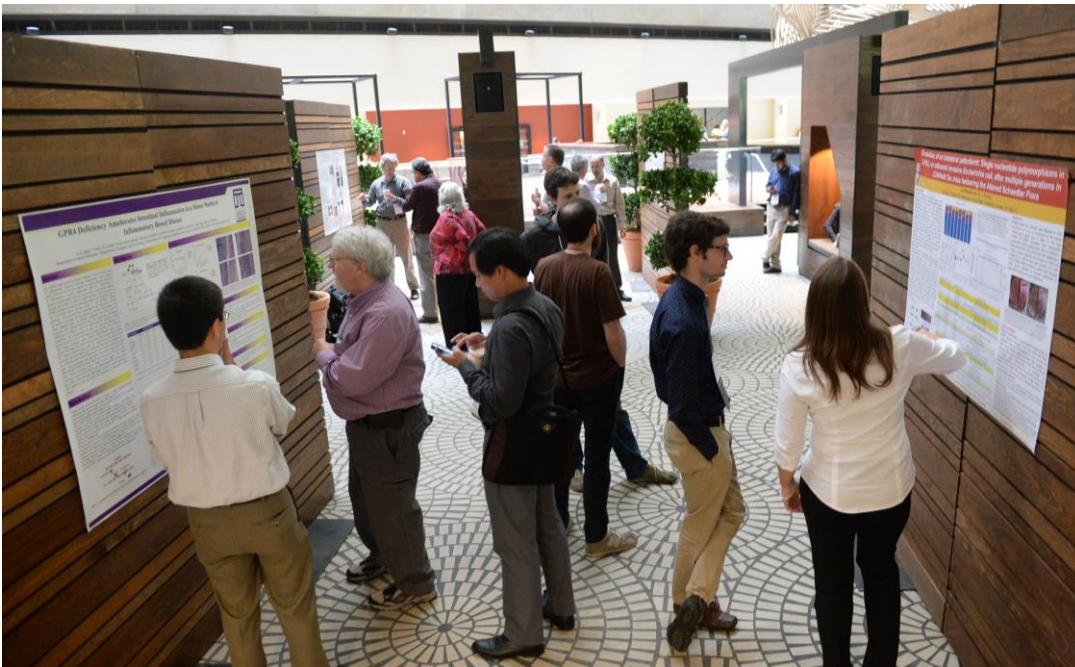
"This Breakthrough Award will enable us to pursue a high-risk, discovery-focused project that has the potential to offer completely new therapeutic approaches for treatment of IBD," said Jeff Karp, Associate Professor at Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School, and Faculty at the Harvard Stem Cell Institute.

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The 2015 Breakthrough Award recipients are:

- **Sean Fielding Brady, PhD**, The Rockefeller University, New York, NY
- **Andrea Cerutti, MD**, Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York, NY
- **Alexander V. Chervonsky, MD, PhD**, The University of Chicago, Chicago, IL
- **Marco Colonna, MD**, Washington University, St. Louis, MO
- **Gerard Eberl, PhD**, Institut Pasteur, Paris, France
- **Katherine Fitzgerald, PhD**, University of Massachusetts, Worcester, MA
- **Jeffrey Karp, PhD**, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, MA
- **Daniel Mucida, PhD**, The Rockefeller University, New York, NY
- **José Henrique Veiga Fernandes, DVM, PhD**, Instituto de Medicina Molecular, Lisboa, Portugal

Complementing its grant programs, the Foundation will host its fifth annual Innovations Symposium “Emerging IBD Strategies,” on July 21–22, 2016, in San Francisco. This event brings together scientists from disparate scientific fields to encourage dialogue and spark new avenues of IBD research. Read more about the Symposium at: krfoundation.org/symposium



Caption: Investigators share their work and ideas with renowned guest speakers, international grantees and research colleagues during poster sessions at the Rainin Foundation's Innovations Symposium.

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About the Kenneth Rainin Foundation

Kenneth Rainin Foundation is a private family foundation dedicated to enhancing quality of life by championing and sustaining the arts, promoting early childhood literacy and supporting research to cure chronic disease. Collaboration and innovation are at the heart of all its programs. The Foundation invests in ideas that leverage resources and build partnerships to advance its mission. Since 2010, the foundation has awarded 70 grants and over \$8 million in funding for promising scientific research projects with the potential to cure Inflammatory Bowel Disease. The Foundation's [Scientific Advisory Board](#), comprised of leading scientists throughout the U.S. and abroad, guides the Foundation's Health grants program. More information at krfoundation.org.