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WMIS Young Investigator of the Year Demonstrates New Preclinical Models of Central Nervous System Tuberculosis for Early Detection of Brain Inflammation in Children

CULVER CITY, Calif., September 14, 2015 – The World Molecular Imaging Society (WMIS) proudly recognizes the outstanding commitment to research and endeavors of the next generation of researchers with the presentation of the 2015 Young Investigator Award to Elizabeth Tucker, M.D., Johns Hopkins University, at the 2015 World Molecular Imaging Congress (WMIC) meeting in Honolulu, Hawaii. Honoring distinction in her work based on the quality of the science, the clarity of presentation and the ability to answer questions about the abstract, Dr. Tucker was presented the Young Investigator Award for her work titled “Noninvasive imaging of tuberculosis-associated neuroinflammation with radioiodinated DPA-713 in an in vivo pediatric rabbit model.”

Tuberculosis (TB) is second greatest killer worldwide due to a single infectious agent according to World Health Organization (WHO, Tuberculosis Fact Sheet, 2015). In 2013, 9 million people fell ill with TB and 1.5 million died from the disease. Central nervous system (CNS) TB in children continues to be a major global health problem with devastating morbidity and mortality for those affected. A lot of the morbidity associated with CNS TB in children is due to secondary inflammation of the brain. This study will enable the use of non-invasive techniques to monitor the brain inflammatory response for TB for early detection of disease and to monitor response to therapy.

“As a pediatrician interested in global health and critical care, I hope that my research brings awareness to central nervous system TB in children, which continues to be a major health problem worldwide. I am excited to continue working with Dr. Sujatha Kannan, Dr. Sanjay Jain and Dr. Supriya Pokkali at Johns Hopkins who have been instrumental mentors and collaborators in my research,” said Dr. Tucker. “We plan to use this model of CNS TB in children to test new treatments and monitor the response to treatments with this non-invasive imaging technology. Our hope is to be able to translate our results to help improve outcomes of children afflicted with the devastating disease.”

“Infectious diseases is one of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality worldwide and also a major cause of death in cancer patients. However, methods to diagnose and monitor infections remain imprecise. WMIS recognizes this scientific gap, and it is so exciting to see that more people are getting involved,” said Sanjay Jain, M.D., Associate Professor of Pediatrics and International Health, Johns Hopkins University. “Liz is a Pediatrician who works jointly with our group and Dr. Sujatha Kannan, who focuses on neuro-inflammation. I was thrilled to find out that she won the young investigator of the year award, which is deserving of her commitment to this work!”

Two additional young investigators were also recognized as finalists for the 2015 award: J. Scott Cordova, Ph.D. candidate, Emory University, for his work titled “Volumetric MR Spectroscopic Imaging Identifies Infiltrating Margin in Glioblastoma for 5-ALA Intraoperative Fluorescence-Guided Surgery” and Stefan Harmsen, Ph.D., Research Candidate, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center for his work titled, “Rational Design of Surface-Enhanced Resonance Raman Scattering Nanoprobes with Attomolar Sensitivity.”

“I was honored to be a finalist for this award at a conference like World Molecular Imaging Congress that highlighted so many advances in imaging and treatment around the world. I am truly humbled to be chosen from a group of such incredible investigators and inspired to continue my work,” added Dr. Tucker.

ABOUT WORLD MOLECULAR IMAGING SOCIETY

The WMIS is dedicated to developing and promoting translational research through multimodality molecular imaging. The education and abstract-driven WMIC is the annual meeting of the WMIS and is held in conjunction with partner societies including the European Society for Molecular Imaging (ESMI) and the Federation of Asian Societies for Molecular Imaging (FASMI). WMIC provides a unique setting for scientists and clinicians with very diverse backgrounds to interact, present, and follow cutting-edge advances in the rapidly expanding field of molecular imaging that impacts nearly every biomedical discipline. Industry exhibits at the congress included corporations who have created the latest advances in preclinical and clinical imaging approaches and equipment, providing a complete molecular imaging educational technology showcase. For more information: www.wmis.org

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