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## From the President's Desk: April/May 2017

The IAS continues to support early career scientists interested in research that will then benefit their home countries, laboratories, clinics, and ultimately our patients through the **IAS Visiting Fellowship Award** program.

The objectives of the Visiting Fellowship are to:

- Improve skills and knowledge in the field of cardiovascular disease
- Learn new research techniques in the field of cardiovascular disease
- Implement new techniques or initiate new programs in atherosclerosis and cardiovascular disease in the home country

This year the application call for the IAS Visiting Fellowship Award which is open to scientists  $\leq 40$  years old working in the field of atherosclerosis and related diseases, not only generated applications from many different countries globally but the winners from Brazil, China, Spain, and Switzerland will also be able to gain worldwide experience—in Canada, the Netherlands, and the United States. The competition this year was very stiff and as such, we would like to also thank the IAS Award Review Committee for its difficult and challenging job in evaluating the many interesting and eligible submissions.

We are pleased to announce the winners of the 2017 IAS Visiting Fellowship Awards:

1. **Kepa Belloso-Urbe** from Leioa, Spain, will work with Prof. Carlos Fernandez-Hernando in his laboratory at the Program of Vascular Biology and Therapeutics at the Yale School of Medicine (New Haven, CT, USA) To contribute to the development of anti-miRNA-based therapeutic strategies to treat atherosclerosis by optimizing the distribution and enhancing stability and the long-term efficacy of anti-miRNAs in the body through its "functionalization" into recombinant lipoproteins.
2. **Fernando Giuffrida** from Salvador, Brazil, will work in Prof. Alessandro Doria's laboratory in the Section on Genetics and Epidemiology of the Joslin Diabetes Center, Joslin Diabetes Clinic, an affiliate of Harvard Medical School (Boston, MA, USA) to seek further proof that the CAD locus close to GLUL (rs10911021) affects the risk of macrovascular complications of diabetes by increasing susceptibility to oxidative stress through an impairment of the  $\gamma$ -glutamyl cycle and glutathione production.

3. **Zhihan Tang** from Hengyang, Hunan, China will work in Prof. Xi-Long Zheng 's Laboratory in the Libin Cardiovascular Institute of Alberta, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology in the Cumming School of Medicine, University of Calgary (Calgary, AB, Canada) to determine the roles of PCSK9 in phenotypic switch of vascular SMCs and to determine the role of smooth muscle PCSK9 in the development of atherosclerosis.
  
4. **Paolo Zanoni** from Schlieren, Switzerland will work with Prof. Jan Albert Kuivenhoven in his laboratory in the Department of Pediatrics, Molecular Genetics, University of Groningen, University Medical Center Groningen (Groningen, The Netherlands) to determine the role of specific candidate genes *in vivo* to: generate a series of CRISPR/Cas9-mediated liver-specific KO mice ( $\pm 3$  targets) and proceed to phenotyping by analyzing the plasma lipoprotein profile and the plasma kinetics and tissue uptake of  $^{125}\text{I}$ -LDL after tail vein injection.

Many thanks to all who applied; we appreciate the efforts made by all the candidates and look forward to more and exciting research in the future.