ATA Research Grants

Jason E. Coleman, PhD

University of Florida

Gainesville, FL

“Effects of Early Hypo- and Hyperthyroidism on Long-term Cortical Circuit Plasticity”

Dr. Jason Coleman of the University of Florida was awarded a 2017 thyroid research grant for the project titled “Effects of Early Hypo- and Hyperthyroidism on Long-term Cortical Circuit Plasticity” by the American Thyroid Association. The grant was funded by the American Thyroid Association. Dr. Coleman has over 10 years of experience in research investigating the visual system and in the development and use of viral vectors for gene transfer for studying the nervous system. Dr. Coleman obtained his PhD in Neuroscience at the University of Florida (UF) where he conducted his thesis research focused on developing a lentiviral vector for the successful treatment of a form of inherited retinal blindness in a chicken model. He went on to perform his postdoctoral research in the laboratory of Professor Mark Bear at MIT, where his studies focused on investigations of visual circuitry in the mouse and of the contribution of axon remodeling to rapid experience-dependent plasticity in the visual cortex. While at MIT, he developed a paradigm for labeling and imaging specific subsets axons and synapses in vivo and helped design a two-photon tailored for chronic in vivo imaging of neurons. Dr. Coleman was recently recruited to UF. As a newly established PI in Pediatrics and the Child Health Research Institute at UF, he has established a successful research program studying the effects of perinatal insults on long-term neural structure and function and has already obtained competitive funding from the NIH and NSF.

Press Release

Marco Medici, MD, PhD, MSc

Erasmus Medical Center

Rotterdam, The Netherlands

“Personalized management of thyroid disease”

Dr. Marco Medici of the Erasmus Medical Center was awarded a 2017 thyroid research grant for the project titled “Personalized management of thyroid disease” by the American Thyroid Association. The grant was funded by the American Thyroid Association. Dr. Medici’s research focuses on the genetic basis of the HPT axis, as until recently only a limited number of genetic variants associated with thyroid function had been identified. In order to perform large-scale genetic studies, he initiated an international consortium, which now includes 34 centers with available (epi)genetic and thyroid function data in >80,000 participants. They have identified many new genetic determinants of thyroid function. After he finished his PhD (Cum Laude) in 2014, he subsequently did a postdoctoral research fellowship at the Harvard Institutes of Medicine and Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston, USA. He is currently a clinical fellow in Endocrinology and actively leading the research which forms the basis for his funded thyroid research project. The ATA

thyroid research grant will enable him to take the next important step in his career which is to establish his first own independent line of translational research.

Press Release

Lawrence Shirley, MD, MS, FACS

The Ohio State University

Wexner Medical Center

Columbus, OH

“Impact of BRAF-mutated Papillary Thyroid Cancers on Cancer-Associated Fibroblast Genotype and Phenotype”

Dr. Lawrence Andrew “Drew” Shirley MD, MS, FACS of the Ohio State University was awarded a 2017 thyroid research grant for the project titled “Impact of BRAF-mutated Papillary Thyroid Cancers on Cancer-Associated Fibroblast Genotype and Phenotype” by the American Thyroid Association. The grant was funded by the American Thyroid Association. Dr. Shirley is an Assistant Professor in the Division of Surgical Oncology at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center, and is the Associate Program Director of the Surgical

Oncology Fellowship. Dr. Shirley received his BA in English/Molecular Biology at Vanderbilt University and MD from the University of Kentucky College of Medicine. He went on to complete his General Surgery Residency at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, and a Surgical Oncology Fellowship at The Ohio State University. While in Fellowship, he also received a Masters in Medical Science. He joined the faculty at Ohio State University in October 2014. He is board certified in general surgery and complex general surgical oncology. His clinical practice focuses on the surgical management of endocrine disease, including thyroid, parathyroid, and adrenal diseases. His basic science laboratory focuses on the role of cancer-associated fibroblasts in thyroid cancer as a method to both develop novel biomarkers to guide treatment as well as uncover novel therapeutic targets for more aggressive variants of this cancer type.

Press Release

ThyCa Research Grants

Glenn J. Hanna, M.D.

Dana-Farber Cancer Institute / Brigham &

Women's Hospital

Boston, MA 02215

"Correlating the circulating immune profile with response to dual immune checkpoint inhibition in advanced thyroid cancer"

Dr. Glenn Hanna of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Brigham & Women's Hospital was awarded a 2017 thyroid research grant for the project titled "Correlating the circulating immune profile with response to dual immune checkpoint inhibition in advanced thyroid cancer" by the American Thyroid Association. The grant is awarded by the ATA Research Committee, chaired by Dr. Motoyasu Saji, approved by the ATA Board of Directors and administered by the ATA Headquarters' office. Administrative and grant tracking support provided by the ATA. Research awardees are honored at the ATA Annual Meeting and on the ATA website with additional presentations and recognition on the ATA annual meeting program. Grant funding was generously provided by the ThyCa: Thyroid Cancer Survivors' Association, Inc. Dr. Hanna completed his residency training in internal medicine at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and fellowship training in

hematology & medical oncology at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute (DFCI) in 2016. Prior to this, he earned his medical degree from Georgetown University School of Medicine in 2010, where he graduated summa cum laude, a member of Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Society and the Kober Medalist for academic excellence. Dr. Hanna also graduated summa cum laude from the University of Florida, and is originally from the south Florida area. He joined the faculty of the Center for Head & Neck Oncology at the DFCI in 2017. His research focuses on understanding mechanisms of response and resistance to immunotherapies in head & neck and thyroid cancers.

Press Release

Jens Lohr, MD, PhD

Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

Boston, MA

“Characterization of treatment response in thyroid cancer by cfDNA”

Dr. Jens Lohr of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute was awarded a 2017 thyroid research grant for the project titled "Characterization of treatment response in thyroid cancer by cfDNA" by the American Thyroid Association. The grant is awarded by the ATA Research Committee, chaired by Dr. Motoyasu Saji, approved by the ATA Board of Directors and administered by the ATA Headquarters' office. Administrative and grant tracking support provided by the ATA. Research awardees are honored at the ATA Annual Meeting and on the ATA website with additional presentations and recognition on the ATA annual meeting program. Grant funding was generously provided by the ThyCa: Thyroid Cancer Survivors' Association, Inc. Dr. Lohr obtained his MD and PhD from Ruprecht-Karls University in Heidelberg, Germany, where he also obtained training as an immunologist. He completed a residency in internal medicine at University of California San Francisco (UCSF), and a medical oncology fellowship at the Dana-Farber/Partners Cancer Care program. He performed postdoctoral work in immunology at UCSF and in cancer genomics at the Broad Institute (Cambridge, MA). Dr. Lohr is board certified in internal medicine, medical oncology and hematology and practices as a clinician at Dana-Farber/Partners Cancer Care. Dr. Lohr is specialty chief editor of Precision Medicine of the journal Frontiers in Medicine.

The Lohr lab explores tumor evolution and drug resistance in thyroid cancer as well as other types of malignancies. The lab uses liquid biopsy approaches, as tools to gain insight into tumor biology, simply from a vial of blood, and translate these findings into novel targeted therapies. For mechanistic exploration of these candidate targets the lab uses a wide variety of tools, which span the spectrum from biochemistry to mouse models. These approaches will lead to a better understanding of the dynamic molecular and genetic changes of cancer over time, which will be crucial for effective precision medicine.

Press Release

Vicki Emma Smith, PhD

University of Birmingham

Edgbaston

Birmingham, UK.

“A New Molecular Switch in Thyroid Cancer.”

Dr. Vicki Smith of the University of Birmingham was awarded a 2017 thyroid research grant for the project titled “A New Molecular Switch in Thyroid Cancer” by the American Thyroid Association. The grant is awarded by the ATA Research Committee, chaired by Dr. Motoyasu Saji, approved by the ATA Board of Directors and administered by the ATA Headquarters’ office. Administrative and grant tracking support provided by the ATA. Research awardees are honored at the ATA Annual Meeting and on the ATA website with additional

presentations and recognition on the ATA annual meeting program. Grant funding was generously provided by the ThyCa: Thyroid Cancer Survivors' Association, Inc. Dr. Smith is a Lecturer in Molecular Endocrinology at the University of Birmingham, UK. After graduating with an Honors Degree in Medical Biochemistry from the University of Leicester, she spent several years working in industry performing genetic association studies of various disorders including Autoimmune Thyroid Disease. Dr. Smith moved to the University of Birmingham and successfully completed her PhD investigating the downregulation of NIS and critical radioiodine treatment in thyroid cancer under the supervision of Professors Jayne Franklyn and Chris McCabe. She continued this research as a Medical Research Council-funded Post-Doctoral Researcher in Birmingham, with a brief visit to Professor James Fagin's laboratory at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York, publishing several high impact papers and achieving a number of prestigious academic prizes and awards. Dr. Smith has recently taken up a Lecturer post and is currently building her independent research group focusing on the molecular pathogenesis of thyroid cancer. Her main research interests include investigating thyroid cancer signaling pathways, improving radioiodine treatment and identifying novel therapies. Dr. Smith is a member of the Society for Endocrinology Science Committee and the British Thyroid Association Executive Committee. She is dedicated to integrating molecular and clinical research in order to improve the outcomes of thyroid cancer patients.

Press Release

Bite Me Cancer Research Grants

Brian P Danysh, PhD

The University of Texas MD Anderson

Cancer Center

Houston TX

“Novel Alternative Pathways and Mutational Hotspots in Papillary Thyroid Cancer with Acquired Resistance to BRAF Inhibitors”

Dr. Brian Danysh of the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center was awarded a 2017 thyroid research grant for the project titled “Novel Alternative Pathways and Mutational Hotspots in Papillary Thyroid Cancer with Acquired Resistance to BRAF Inhibitors” by the American Thyroid Association. The grant is awarded by the ATA Research Committee, chaired by Dr. Motoyasu Saji, approved by the ATA Board of Directors and administered by the ATA Headquarters’ office.

Administrative and grant tracking support provided by the ATA. Research awardees are honored at the ATA Annual Meeting and on the ATA website with additional presentations and recognition on the ATA annual meeting program. Grant funding was generously provided by Bite Me Cancer. Dr. Danysh's earliest contributions to science emerged from the confluence of his interests in cellular and extracellular matrix biology, which he acquired during his graduate studies at the University of Delaware and his interests in translational cancer research, which he developed during his postdoctoral trainings at Rice University and MD Anderson Cancer Center. Throughout his trainings, he has cultivated collaborations with scientists and clinicians to develop novel approaches to scientific and therapeutic challenges. At Rice University, he used nanotechnology to exploit aberrant mucin expression in endometrial carcinoma, delivering targeted nanoparticles and laser irradiation to selectively destroy cancer cells. The project, which required a collaboration with physicists, demonstrated mucins as promising therapeutic targets. His current research involves a collaboration with clinicians and examines mechanisms of acquired inhibitor resistance. He is studying the genetic and epigenetic modifications that occur in PTC cells that allow them to escape sensitivity to BRAF inhibitors. His most recent publication describes BRAF(V600E) inhibitor resistance through acquisition of a KRAS(G12D) mutation following long-term vemurafenib treatment. Recent findings have drawn his attention to alternative mechanisms outside the RAF-MEK-ERK and PI3K-AKT pathways, which is the focus of his funded thyroid cancer research project. His ultimate goal is to discover novel therapeutic targets to recurrent metastatic thyroid cancer.

Press Release

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