



ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON
MEDICAL SCHOOL

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Fellowship Grants Garner \$450K for Research at The Cancer Institute of New Jersey
Funding Given by New Jersey Commission on Cancer Research and Susan G. Komen for the Cure

New Brunswick, N.J., May 21, 2009 – A number of investigators at The Cancer Institute of New Jersey (CINJ) have been awarded pre- and post-doctoral fellowship grants totaling \$456,801 to study the role of cell death, computer-aided detection of cancer targets during radiation, and the effects of caffeine on genes. CINJ is a Center of Excellence of UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

Most of the awards are targeted toward the biological process of autophagy. This process involves the self-digestion of cellular material when cells are deprived of nutrients, in which case it acts as a cell survival mechanism. However, if autophagy proceeds to completion, it may lead to cell death.

Highland Park resident Ning Chen, PhD, a research associate in Dr. Vassiliki Karantza's laboratory, is the recipient of a \$180,000 post-doctoral fellowship in basic research from Susan G. Komen for the Cure. He currently is investigating how the process of autophagy affects breast cancer responsiveness to treatment and will continue his work under this award through April 2012.

Also from the Karantza laboratory, Fred Lozy, a PhD graduate student in the joint Graduate Program in Cell and Developmental Biology at the UMDNJ-Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and Rutgers, has been given a \$50,000 pre-doctoral fellowship from the New Jersey Commission on Cancer Research (NJCCR). The award will allow the Monmouth Junction resident to continue studying how the HER2 and autophagy pathways interact in promoting breast cancer. The fellowship is funded through March 2011.

And Anne Marie Strohecker, PhD, from the Dr. Eileen White laboratory, was awarded a post-doctoral fellowship from the NJCCR. The \$93,634 grant will support the New York City resident's study in the area of autophagy in tumor growths in the lung through 2011. Dr. Strohecker notes experiments supported by this funding have the potential to identify a novel mechanism of lung cancer suppression through autophagy.

In other areas of research, NJCCR has awarded more than \$130,000 to two additional investigators.

From Dr. Ning Yue's laboratory, Jinghao Zhou, PhD, of Highland Park received a post-doctoral fellowship award of \$86,167 to develop a computer-aided cancer target detection system in which 3D technology would be utilized not only to detect, but also to delineate cancer targets during radiotherapy treatment. Dr. Zhou, who is a resident physicist in the Department of Radiation Oncology at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, notes such a system may be able to detect a cancer target within a few minutes during radiation treatment. Therefore it could optimize radiation in improving treatment efficacy and quality of life for patients.

And Alexandria Victoria Wierzbowski, a PhD student in the Graduate Program in Cellular and Molecular Pharmacology from Dr. Kathleen W. Scotto's laboratory, received a pre-doctoral fellowship award of \$50,000 to study caffeine-mediated alternative splicing. The research will use caffeine as a tool to dissect

the mechanism by which splicing occurs in the cancer-associated gene known as KLF6. The goal is to broaden the understanding of the process in other cancer-associated genes and to provide insight on how this mechanism may lead to cancer. The fellowship is funded through March 2011.

About The Cancer Institute of New Jersey

The Cancer Institute of New Jersey (www.cinj.org) is the state's first and only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, and is dedicated to improving the prevention, detection, treatment and care of patients with cancer. CINJ's physician-scientists engage in translational research, transforming their laboratory discoveries into clinical practice, quite literally bringing research to life. The Cancer Institute of New Jersey is a center of excellence of UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. To support CINJ, please call the Cancer Institute of New Jersey Foundation at 1-888-333-CINJ.

The Cancer Institute of New Jersey Network is comprised of hospitals throughout the state and provides a mechanism to rapidly disseminate important discoveries into the community. Flagship Hospital: Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital. Major Clinical Research Affiliate Hospitals: Carol G. Simon Cancer Center at Morristown Memorial Hospital, Carol G. Simon Cancer Center at Overlook Hospital, and Jersey Shore University Medical Center. Affiliate Hospitals: Bayshore Community Hospital, CentraState Healthcare System, Cooper University Hospital*, JFK Medical Center, Raritan Bay Medical Center, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital at Hamilton (CINJ at Hamilton), Saint Peter's University Hospital, Somerset Medical Center, Southern Ocean County Hospital, The University Hospital/UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School*, and University Medical Center at Princeton. *Academic Affiliate

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