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ILLINOIS EYE AND VISION RESEARCHERS AMONG RECIPIENTS OF \$197K GRANT FUNDING FROM MIDWEST EYE-BANKS

CHICAGO – The Illinois Eye-Bank has announced the largest research grant funding disbursement in the 28-year history of Midwest Eye-Banks' Eye and Vision Research Program. The program's goal is to provide seed money for research into the causes and cures of blinding eye conditions.

Midwest Eye-Banks' Research Review Committee met on May 30 to evaluate proposals received earlier in the year. The Committee recommended funding for 12 research proposals and seven student stipends totaling \$197,400. The Eye-Bank's Board of Directors approved the Committee's recommendation in a meeting on June 14.

"Midwest Eye-Banks is one of few organizations of its kind that provides substantial funding for eye and vision research," explains Charles Pivoney, Chief Operating Officer, also in charge of Illinois Eye-Bank operations. "Eye banks are nonprofit organizations that primarily recover, evaluate and distribute eye tissue for transplantation. However, we know transplantation can only address about 10 percent of all blinding eye conditions. That's why we go a step farther with our Eye and Vision Research Program, which enables us to fight blindness on all fronts through research support."

Of the 12 research proposals approved for funding, three were from academic institutions in Illinois, including Northwestern University and the University of Illinois, Chicago. The proposed research will investigate such eye conditions as glaucoma and diseases of the retina.

Since its inception in 1980, the Eye-Bank's Eye and Vision Research Program has awarded \$2.5 million in research grant funding and student stipends. Funding supports researchers throughout the Eye-Bank's service area in Illinois, Michigan and New Jersey.

The Illinois Eye-Bank is a division of Midwest Eye-Banks, a 501(c)(3), not-for-profit organization dedicated to the restoration of sight. It recovers, evaluates, and distributes human eye tissue for transplantation. It also supports research into the causes and cures of blinding eye conditions, promotes donation awareness through public and professional education, and provides humanitarian aid to people in need of corneal transplantation throughout the world. For more information, visit the Illinois Eye-Bank online at www.illinoiseyebank.org or call (800) 548-4703.

Midwest Eye-Banks
Research Program
2008 Grant Awards

1. Stein, Joshua, MD, University of Michigan; Monitoring of Patients for Ocular Side Effects of Corticosteroids. (\$15,000)
2. Huang, XI, Ph.D., Wayne State University; Role of triggering receptors expressed on Myeloid Cells 2 (TREM-2) in Bacterial Keratitis. (\$15,000)
3. Zacks, David; H, MD, Ph.D., University of Michigan; Small molecule inhibition of photoreceptor apoptosis. (\$15,000)
4. Xu, Keping, MD, Kresge Eye Institute; Antioxidants and EGFR Ligands in Accelerating Corneal Epithelial Wound Healing in Diabetic Rats (\$15,000)
5. Braun, Rod, Ph.D., Wayne State University; New model of Metastatic Uveal Melanoma. (\$15,000)
6. Volin, Michael, Ph.D., Midwestern University Chicago; Chemokine expression by cytokine-stimulated iris stromal and iris endothelial cells. (\$15,000)
7. Blair, Norman, MD, University of Illinois at Chicago; A Novel Method for Quantitative Control of Retinal Hypoxia. (\$15,000)
8. Xu, Keping, MD, Kresge Eye Institute; Biological and Biochemical Characterization of Stromal Fibroblast Derived from Schnyder Crystalline Corneal Dystrophy. (\$15,000)
9. Singh, Pukhrambam, Ph.D., Wayne State University; Gene regulation by Chromatin remodeling and transcription of factor accessibility in Diabetic Retinopathy. (\$14,900)
10. Liu, Xiaorong, Ph.D., Northwestern University; Brain Derived Neurotrophic Factor (BDNF) in Glaucoma Pathogenesis. (\$15,000)
11. Glaser, Tom, MD, Ph.D., University of Michigan Medical School. Identification of a new autosomal dominant Microphthalmia-Anophthalmia-Coloboma (MAC) disease gene. (\$15,000)
12. Weiss, Jayne, MD, Wayne State University; Mutation Analysis and Development of an animal model of Schnyder Crystalline Corneal Dystrophy. (\$15,000)

Student Stipend Awards, \$2,500

Anton Kolomeyer, New Jersey Medical School
Irina Koreen, University of Michigan
Larry Koreen, University of Michigan
Shamika Darisaw, University of Michigan
Shripaad Shukla, The University of Illinois at Chicago
Zimei Zhou, Wayne State University
Sally Madsen-Bouterse, Wayne State University