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NIH announces Common Fund 2015 High-Risk, High-Reward Research awardees

NIH to fund 78 awards to support highly innovative biomedical research

Seventy-eight grants have been awarded to scientists proposing highly innovative approaches to major contemporary challenges in biomedical research, under the High-Risk, High-Reward Research program supported by the NIH Common Fund. Awards support exceptional investigators pursuing bold research projects that span the broad mission of the NIH, including developing methods for cells to synthesize their own drugs, using cell phones to identify and track disease-carrying mosquitoes in their natural habitats, stopping depression by monitoring and altering brain cell states, and exploring how socially learned behavior can be passed on biologically to future generations.

“This program has consistently produced research that revolutionized scientific fields by giving investigators the freedom to take risks and explore potentially groundbreaking concepts.” said NIH Director Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D. “We look forward to the remarkable advances in biomedical research the 2015 awardees will make.”

The NIH Common Fund encourages collaboration and supports a series of exceptionally high-impact, trans-NIH programs. Common Fund programs are designed to pursue major opportunities and gaps in biomedical research that no single NIH Institute could tackle alone, but that the agency as a whole can address to make the biggest impact possible on the progress of medical research.

The High-Risk, High-Reward Research program, part of the NIH Common Fund, manages the following four awards:

The [Pioneer Award](#), established in 2004, challenges investigators at all career levels to pursue new research directions and develop groundbreaking approaches with a high impact on a broad area of biomedical or behavioral science.

The [New Innovator Award](#), established in 2007, supports unusually innovative research from early career investigators who are within 10 years of their terminal degree or clinical residency and have not yet received a research project grant (R01) or equivalent NIH grant.

The [Transformative Research Award](#), established in 2009, promotes cross-cutting, interdisciplinary approaches and is open to individuals and teams of investigators who propose research that could potentially create or challenge existing paradigms.

The [Early Independence Award](#), established in 2011, provides an opportunity for exceptional junior scientists who have recently received their doctoral degree or finished medical residency to skip traditional post-doctoral training and move immediately into independent research positions.

In 2015, NIH has awarded 13 Pioneer awards, 41 New Innovator awards, eight Transformative Research awards, and 16 Early Independence awards. The total funding, which represents contributions from the NIH Common Fund and multiple NIH institutes, centers, and offices is approximately \$121 million.

More information on current awardees and the NIH Common Fund High Risk-High Reward Research Program can be found at: <http://commonfund.nih.gov/highrisk>.

Institutes, centers, and offices that will be supporting these awards include: the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health; the National Cancer Institute; the National Eye Institute; the National Human Genome Research Institute; the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; the National Institute on Aging; the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases; the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering; the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development; the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases; the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences; the National Institute of General Medical Sciences; the National Institute of Mental Health; the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke; and the National Library of Medicine.

About the National Institutes of Health (NIH): NIH, the nation's medical research agency, includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIH is the primary federal agency conducting and supporting basic, clinical, and translational medical research, and is investigating the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit www.nih.gov.

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