

For Immediate Release:

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NORTH CAROLINA AGING RESEARCHER BRIAN DIEKMAN AWARDED \$100,000 ARTHRITIS AND AGING RESEARCH GRANT

Chapel Hill, NC-- Brian Diekman, Ph.D. at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has been awarded a \$100,000 Arthritis and Aging Research Grant.

Since 2012, The American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR), the premiere non-profit organization dedicated to advancing biomedical research on aging, and the Arthritis National Research Foundation (ANRF), the only charity solely focused on funding arthritis research to cure arthritis, have been partners to support arthritis projects that are related to the age-related processes.

Through the ANRF/AFAR grant, Dr. Diekman--an Assistant Professor at the Joint Department of Biomedical Engineering at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and North Carolina State University--will research cellular senescence as a driver and therapeutic target for osteoarthritis (OA).



“Aging is clearly the biggest risk factor for the development of osteoarthritis, but little is known about how specific age-related changes to cells cause the breakdown of cartilage,” says Dr. Diekman. “I want to answer this fundamental question by getting insight into the common mechanisms of aging across different tissue systems. The search for disease-modifying drugs for osteoarthritis has been very challenging, and many patients have to withstand high levels of pain until the time is right for a total joint replacement.”

“Aging is a major risk factor for some forms of arthritis. Osteoarthritis, for example, is strongly linked to aging but the mechanisms for this link are not fully understood,” notes Stephanie Lederman, M.Ed., Executive Director of AFAR. “AFAR is pleased to partner with ANRF to advance new discoveries that can help prevent and better treat all forms of arthritis.”

Helene Belisle, Executive Director, of the Arthritis National Research Foundation, notes: “Understanding the connections between the fundamental mechanisms of aging and arthritis can move us closer to effective treatments and cures for arthritis. With this collaboration, ANRF and AFAR have joined efforts to support research in this still underexplored research area.”

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About AFAR The American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR) is a national non-profit organization whose mission is to support and advance healthy aging through biomedical research. Founded in 1981, AFAR has championed the cause and supported the funding of science in healthier aging and age-related medicine. To address the shortage of physicians and researchers dedicated to the science of healthier aging, AFAR funds physicians and scientists probing the fundamental mechanisms of aging, as well as specific diseases associated with aging populations at critical points throughout their careers. Learn at www.afar.org or follow AFAR.org on Twitter and Facebook.

About ANRF The Arthritis National Research Foundation’s mission is to provide initial research funding to brilliant, investigative scientists with new ideas to cure arthritis and related autoimmune diseases. Since 1970, the Arthritis National Research Foundation has funded arthritis research to understand the causes, prevention and development of new treatments for osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, juvenile arthritis and other autoimmune diseases. The Arthritis National Research Foundation provides arthritis research grants to scientists at major universities and research institutes across America. One- and two-year arthritis research grants allow these newer scientists to develop their important research to a stage where it can be continued and further supported by other national agencies.

About the UNC Thurston Arthritis Research Center At the UNC Thurston Arthritis Research Center, our mission is to leverage advanced research, education and clinical expertise to investigate the causes and consequences of arthritis, autoimmune diseases and allergies. We are developing and testing new treatments to help reduce the impact of these diseases on patients and society. Whether we are conducting research in a laboratory setting, implementing population-based studies to better understand the causes and scope of disease, educating future healthcare practitioners, or working with patients in our clinics, we are driven by a passion to make a significant and lasting difference for those we serve. The Thurston Arthritis Research Center is located on the campus of the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, NC.