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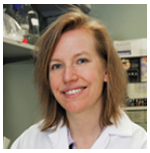
For Immediate Release

AMERICAN FEDERATION FOR AGING RESEARCH ANNOUNCES 2015 SCIENTIFIC AWARDS

New York –

The American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR) is proud to announce its 2015 Scientific Awards:

Leonard Guarente, Ph.D., Novartis Professor of Biology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, will receive the **Irving S. Wright Award of Distinction.** This award is named in honor of AFAR's founder and recognizes exceptional contributions to basic or clinical research in the field of aging. Established in 1982, the award is a framed citation and carries a cash prize of $2,500. Dr. Guarente's current research includes a study of genes and pathways that determine the rate of aging of the human brain, using a computational, bioinformatics approach. This work attempts to study the links between normal brain aging and Alzheimer's and other brain neurodegenerative diseases.



Amy Wagers, Ph.D., Professor of Stem Cell and Regenerative Biology at Harvard University and Harvard Stem Cell Institute, will receive the **Vincent Cristofalo Rising Star Award in Aging Research.** This award is named in honor of the late Dr. Cristofalo, who dedicated his career to aging research and to encouraging young scientists to investigate important problems in the biology of aging. Established in 2008, the award is a framed citation and carries a cash prize of $5,000. Work from Dr. Wagers' lab provides evidence for the existence of a conserved systemic regulatory axis that modulates tissue maintenance and regeneration across a wide variety of tissues that vary significantly in their intrinsic repair capacity, and her ongoing studies have begun to identify the molecules responsible for age-variant regulation of regenerative potential.

"These awards are given annually to members of the aging research community whose work advances the field and our understanding of aging," notes AFAR Executive Director Stephanie Lederman, EdM. "Both awards are named in honor of farsighted scientists, and the recipients are chosen for their vision and accomplishments as well."

Nominations for the awards are by invitation, and are judged by an independent panel of leading aging researchers. Nominees must have made significant contributions to aging research.

Doctors Guarente and Wagers will receive **their awards and present related lectures** on **Friday, November 20, 2015 from 5 – 6:30 pm** at the **Annual Scientific Meeting** of the **Gerontological Society of America** (GSA) in Orlando Florida. Dr. Guerente will present on "Sirtuins and NAD+ in Aging and Diseases." Dr. Wager's lecture will explore "Reversing Dysfunction in Aging Tissues."

The awardees were also recognized at an awards luncheon and scientific panel "The Future of Alzheimer's: Translation and Therapeutics" on October 27 at the Harvard Club in Boston, Massachusetts.

To date, AFAR has given thirty-six Irving Wright Awards and eight Vincent Cristofalo awards.
Learn more about the **history of AFAR's Scientific Awards and past awardees** at
http://www.afar.org/research/awards/scientific-awards.

About this Year's Awardees

Dr. Leonard P. Guarente is the Novartis Professor of Biology at MIT, Director of the Glenn Labs at MIT, and affiliate of the Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research. His initial work was in the area of transcription, and his lab identified UASs, TATA-binding protein, and transcriptional coactivators. His lab went on to discover that a yeast protein SIR2 was a key anti-aging factor in that organism and that a SIR2-related proteins, termed sirtuins, slow the aging process in a wide variety or organisms ranging up to mammals. Moreover he discovered the novel biochemical activity for yeast and human sirtuins Sir2 and SIRT1--NAD-dependent deacetylation. This finding led to the hypothesis that sirtuins mediate the healthful effects of calorie restriction, which has been amply corroborated in many laboratories. The identification of the biochemical activity of sirtuins also provided an assay for screening for drugs that can activate SIRT1. These include drugs initiated at Sirtris and currently under development by GSK to activate the human SIRT1 protein allosterically. These drugs are expected to enter the clinic soon. In addition, it has emerged that NAD+ levels decline in an aging population, and the use of NAD+ precursors offers a promising treatment to restore NAD levels, sirtuin activity, and health benefits to an aging population. It is likely that such drugs would represent a new strategy to delay or ameliorate the major diseases of aging, including diabetes, cancer, neurodegenerative diseases, and cardiovascular disease. His current research includes a study of genes and pathways that determine the rate of aging of the human brain, using a computational, bioinformatics approach. This work attempts to study the links between normal brain aging and Alzheimer's and other brain neurodegenerative diseases. He was elected to American Academy of Arts and Science in 2004 and the French Academie des Sciences in 2009. He is the recipient of the Feodor Lynen Award at the 2012 Miami Winter Symposium in 2012, and the 2009 Dart/NYU Biotechnology Achievement Award.

For consideration of this award, a nominator shared: "Dr. Guarente's contributions to both research on aging and to the mentoring of trainees who have entered our field of scholarship are truly amazing. A search of his publication record on the Web of Science revealed 289 publications of which 106 dealt with the biology of aging. Remarkably, six of his publications on aging and sirtuins have been cited more than 1,000 times; his famous 2000 Nature paper on 'Transcriptional silencing and longevity protein Sir2 is an NAD-dependent histone deacetylase' has 1,515 citations!"

Amy Wagers, PhD is a Professor in the Department of Stem Cell and Regenerative Biology at Harvard University. She received her Ph.D. in Immunology and Microbial Pathogenesis in 1999 from Northwestern University, and then pursued postdoctoral training in stem cell biology at Stanford University. In 2004, Dr. Wagers joined the faculty at Harvard Medical School as an Assistant Professor of Pathology and an Investigator at the Joslin Diabetes Center. She moved to Harvard's Department of Stem Cell and Regenerative Biology upon its founding in 2008, and was promoted to Associate Professor in 2009. In 2012, Dr. Wagers became the first incumbent of the Forst Family Professorship in Stem Cell and Regenerative Biology. She is also a Senior Investigator at the Joslin Diabetes Center. Dr. Wagers' current research is aimed at understanding how changes in stem cell activity impact tissue homeostasis and repair throughout life. Work from her lab provides evidence for the existence of a conserved systemic regulatory axis that modulates tissue maintenance and regeneration across a wide variety of tissues that vary significantly in their intrinsic repair capacity, and her ongoing studies have begun to identify the molecules responsible for age-variant regulation of regenerative potential. Dr. Wagers has authored more than 90 primary research and review articles, and has served as a scientific advisor for research organizations at the local, national and international levels. Her work has been recognized by awards from the Burroughs Wellcome Fund, Beckman Foundation, WM Keck Foundation, the Glenn Foundation for Medical Research, and by the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers.

As one of Dr. Wagers' nominators stated: "Dr. Wagers has continued a very impressive upward trajectory, publishing 15 original articles and 7 review articles, including papers in leading journals. Several of these studies are particularly notable, as they exploited unique technology, model systems and hypotheses developed in Dr. Wagers' lab…Dr. Wagers' discoveries have had a significant impact on the stem cell field, particularly as it intersects with the fields of metabolism, aging, and cancer biology."

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. AFAR engages the public through webinars, conferences and our online resource, InfoAging, featuring over two dozen downloadable guides, edited by guest experts on topics ranging from theories of aging, age-related conditions, healthy lifestyle tips, and more. Learn at www.afar.org or follow AFARorg on Twitter and Facebook.

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