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McAdams DeMarco Awarded \$100,000 As First Arthritis-Aging Collaborative Researcher

Long Beach, CA and New York, NY – May 7, 2013 – Mara McAdams DeMarco, Ph.D. of Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions in Maryland was awarded \$100,000 to pursue her research on the risk factors and consequences of gout, a form of arthritis, in older adults. The Arthritis National Research Foundation (ANRF) and the American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR) jointly funded her work in their first-time collaboration of the Arthritis and Aging Research Grant.

Every year ANRF and AFAR award grants to early-stage investigators who are carrying out new and innovative research methods in arthritis and aging, respectively. This award is the first grant funded through a collaboration of ANRF and AFAR.

“This grant studying gout, a problem that afflicts more than three million Americans, fits perfectly into the mission of both organizations,” said ANRF Executive Director Helene Belisle. “The Arthritis National Research Foundation is delighted to pool its resources with AFAR to further research in arthritis and aging,”

Gout is a painful and potentially disabling form of arthritis that has been around since ancient times. The first symptoms are usually intense episodes of painful swelling in single joints, most often in the feet. Gout is an enormous public health problem in the older adults, yet the impact of the disease in the older adults has not been the subject of quality, targeted analysis. Dr. McAdams DeMarco will attempt to answer many important questions, such as whether gout is more disabling in older adults than in younger individuals.

Both nonprofit organizations view research as critical for new information that will ultimately benefit patients. This collaboration reinforces their respective approaches for funding research and ensures that only the best up-and-coming scientists receive support.

“AFAR’s collaboration with ANRF has identified a talented researcher whose work promises to illuminate an important intersection between aging biology and arthritis,” says Stephanie Lederman, EdM, Executive Director of AFAR.

Dr. McAdams DeMarco chose gout as her research topic because of its prevalence, rich history, and because she worked closely with the Department of Epidemiology and Division of Rheumatology at Johns Hopkins to develop her doctoral dissertation on gout. She feels confident that, with her extensive knowledge of the disease, she is well equipped to move the research forward in this area.

“This grant is the perfect opportunity for me to pursue this research interest and will help with my career development,” she said. “My goal is to apply the epidemiology of aging research methods to the understudied population of older adults with gout.”

Dr. McAdams DeMarco completed her doctoral degree in 2012 at Johns Hopkins University and has been a faculty instructor at Johns Hopkins for almost two years. She is well supported by the institution and positioned to succeed with her innovative research on gout.

“This is a unique and potentially high impact study,” added Belisle. “The funding priorities of ANRF and AFAR are so closely aligned and Dr. McAdams DeMarco is an outstanding representative for our first collaborative grant in arthritis and aging research.”