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**American Federation for Aging Research and the Hartford Foundation
Award Collaborative Research Grants to Multi-Center Research Teams**

**New Program Advances Scientific Collaborations in
Aging Research**

NEW YORK, July 24, 2007 – Five research teams will receive \$400,000 each to collaborate on translational and multi-disciplinary research on aging as the first recipients of the Hartford/AFAR Collaborative Research Awards, an extension of the Paul B. Beeson Career Development Scholars Program. The announcement was made by the American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR) and the John A. Hartford Foundation.

Expanding on the successful Beeson program which supports physician-scientists engaged in geriatric medicine and aging research, the Hartford/AFAR Collaborative Award supports Beeson Scholars who already have a proven track record in aging research, by fostering collaborations with their Beeson colleagues.

As the number of older adults in the United States continue to grow, there is a greater need to not only provide high-quality medical and supportive care but also to develop new scientific knowledge about the aging process and age-related diseases and disorders. Advances in understanding aging processes at all levels, from disease mechanisms to issues in clinical management to systems of care, require novel approaches and greater interaction within the numerous disciplines contributing to the field. The Hartford Collaborative Award seeks to accelerate collaborations among researchers to move beyond the confines of their own discipline and explore new models of interdisciplinary research.

“There are major opportunities and gaps in research on aging that no single investigator could tackle alone,” said Corinne Rieder, Executive Director of the John A. Hartford Foundation. “Research on aging has multiple influences at play from the cellular to societal, requiring novel approaches and greater interactions among disciplines. Our Beeson Scholars are the top scientists in the nation – a brain trust to help tackle the many research and clinical challenges of geriatric medicine. We are very excited about the prospects for this collaborative research model.”

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“Our ultimate goal is to incorporate all the promising research of our Beeson Scholars into a shared repository of information that will enhance human health as we age,” said Stephanie Lederman, Executive Director of the American Federation for Aging Research. “Society benefits when researchers share lessons learned, and build on the steady progress made in the research and clinical setting,” she added.

The Hartford/AFAR Collaborative Research Award Recipients:

Wes Ely, MD Vanderbilt University School of Medicine	Helen Hoenig, MD Duke University Medical Center	The Cognitive and Physical Rehabilitation of Survivors of Critical Illness: A Randomized Clinical Trial of In-home Rehabilitation
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Older individuals represent the vast majority of ICU patients and increasing numbers are surviving but with residual cognitive and physical deficits. The investigators hope that a multi-component intervention will improve these cognitive and physical outcomes. The intervention will include three components: functional training that focuses on functional mobility and home safety, exercises directed to improve physical impairment in strength, balance and endurance, and cognitive training which targets executive cognitive processes impacting the ability to carry out daily tasks. The investigators will link the multi-modal rehabilitation strategy and take advantage of tele-technology to access distant expertise. Given the multitude of individual rehabilitation strategies available, developing an integrated strategy that incorporates key aspects of each intervention would be a major advance.

Martin Sadowski, MD, PhD, New York University School of Medicine	David Holtzman, MD Washington University School of Medicine	Peptide Mimetic Therapeutic Agents for Blocking the Apolipoprotein E/Abeta Interaction
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A protein called apolipoprotein E or apoE is known to be involved in the process of amyloid-beta deposition in the brain of patients with Alzheimer’s disease. Amyloid-beta deposition is a key factor in causing Alzheimer’s disease. Thus, the interaction between amyloid-beta and apoE is a key treatment target in the disease. Drs. Sadowski and Holtzman’s proposal addresses two important issues: 1) whether blocking the apoE/amyloid-beta interaction can be a potential safe and therapeutic approach for humans; and 2) whether peptidomimetic modification of a region of amyloid-beta called the 12-28 sequence can provide a lead compound with a potential for clinical application. The proposed experiments represent several important steps in advancing a potentially novel form of therapy from animal models to potential clinical trials.

Scott Small, MD Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons	Frank Longo, MD, PhD, Stanford University Medical Center	Ameliorating Age-related Memory Decline
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Through combining the fields of small molecule ligand development and advanced neuron-imaging, Drs. Longo and Small hope to identify a treatment protocol that, for the first time, may prove capable of ameliorating age-related cognitive dysfunction. They will look specifically at the role of exercise to open up the blood brain barrier to allow passage of BDNF - brain derived neuron growth factor.

Laura Dugan, MD
University of
California, San Diego

Jeremy Walston, MD
Johns Hopkins
University School of
Medicine

Systemic Inflammation and Central
Nervous System Dysfunction: A
Mechanistic and Translational Pilot

The project examines a unifying hypothesis that both peripheral inflammation and central neurotransmitter deficits provide a feed-forward mechanism leading to cognitive decline and frailty. To date, little is known about the biology that underlies this vulnerability to adverse neurocognitive outcomes associated with aging and frailty. Dr. Dugan and Walston hope to identify key molecular pathways connecting inflammation to cognitive decline, and to have a biological risk profile for frail older adults most at risk for iatrogenic adverse cognitive outcomes. They plan mouse and human studies to test the hypothesis.

Joshua Hare, MD
University of Miami
Miller School of
Medicine

Michael Schwarzschild,
MD, Harvard Medical
School

A Unified Hypothesis on the Protective
Potential of Urate in Aging Hearts and
Brains

Urate is believed to be a toxic metabolite, and elevated levels are known to result in adverse consequences such as gouty arthritis and nephropathy. However, recent clinical and laboratory findings suggest that urate might provide cardiovascular and neuroprotective benefits. Drs. Hare and Schwarzschild have developed a novel and interesting hypothesis regarding urate as an anti-oxidant playing a protective role in cardiovascular and neurodegenerative diseases of aging. This proposal is in contrast to the current 'dogma' that higher urate levels are bad but has the potential to be a landmark study that can change our thinking in the field.

About the John A. Hartford Foundation

Founded in 1929, the John A. Hartford Foundation is a committed champion of training, research and service system innovations that promote the health and independence of America's older adults. Through its grantmaking, the Foundation seeks to strengthen the nation's capacity to provide effective, affordable care to this rapidly increasing older population by educating "aging-prepared" health professionals (physicians, nurses, social workers), and developing innovations that improve and better integrate health and supportive services. The Foundation was established by John A. Hartford. Mr. Hartford and his brother, George L. Hartford, both former chief executives of the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company, left the bulk of their estates to the Foundation upon their deaths in the 1950s. Additional information about the Foundation and its programs is available at www.jhartfound.org.

About the American Federation for Aging Research

AFAR is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to support biomedical research on aging. It is devoted to creating the knowledge that all of us need to live healthy, productive, and independent lives. Since 1981, AFAR has awarded approximately \$100 million to more than 2,400 talented scientists as part of its broad-based series of grant programs. Its work has led to significant advances in our understanding of the aging process, age-related diseases, and healthy aging practices. AFAR communicates news of these innovations through its organizational web site www.afar.org and educational web sites Infoaging (www.infoaging.org) and Health Compass (www.healthcompass.org).

To learn more about the Paul B. Beeson Career Development Scholars Program, please visit www.Beeson.org.