

Leading Hearing Loss Research Nonprofit Launches Operation Regrow to Accelerate Cures

Operation Regrow provides everyone an opportunity to impact better treatments and cures for hearing loss supported by Hearing Health Foundation.

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, June 13, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Hearing Health Foundation (HHF), the nation's largest charity funder of hearing and balance research, recently launched a new campaign with life-changing potential for the 460,000,000 people worldwide who live with hearing loss.

[Operation Regrow](#), a two-week, high-urgency movement, provides everyone an opportunity to impact better treatments and cures for hearing loss and tinnitus. All gifts made to Operation Regrow will be doubled by an anonymous donor, taking supporters' generosity twice as far.

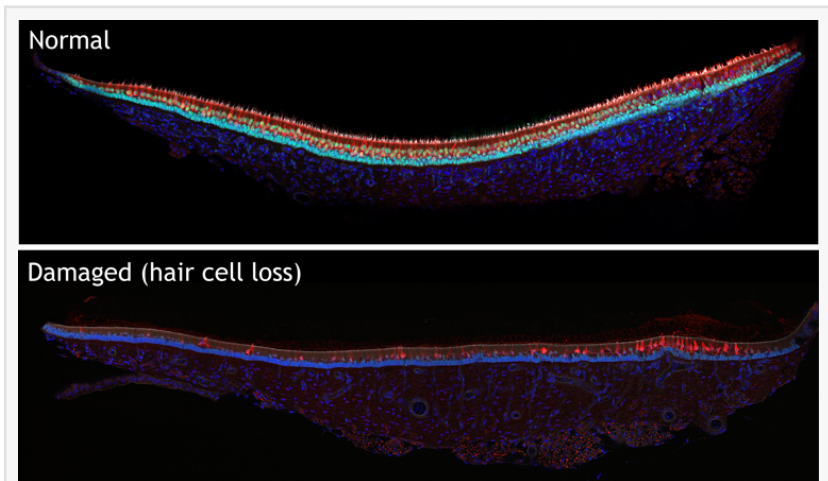
“Regrow” refers to the main objective of HHF’s Hearing Restoration Project (HRP), an international consortium of scientists working to regrow sensory hair cells in the inner ear, a key to restoring hearing. In 1987, HHF-funded scientists discovered chickens can spontaneously regrow the cells in their ears that make hearing possible. For humans, however, damage to these cells—commonly the result of noise, age, ototoxic drugs, infections, or trauma—is permanent.

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Peter Barr-Gillespie, Ph.D.

lasting recovery of hearing in humans.



Undamaged and damaged utricle, an inner ear balance organ, in a chicken. HRP researchers devised a method to study the precise timing of hair cell regeneration in chickens using a single surgical application of an ototoxic drug. Credit: Amanda Janesick, Ph.D.

HRP Hearing Restoration Project

What makes Operation Regrow so urgent? The HRP, founded in 2011, is presently underfunded, falling short of resources needed to ensure projects remain active, staffed, and carefully administered. As Jennifer S. Stone, Ph.D., an HRP scientist based at the University of Washington, explains, “Research is not effective when it happens in fits and starts.” Consistency is necessary to find a safe and effective way to promote the

Following the finding that chickens are able to recover from hearing loss, HHF scientists have identified the same capabilities in zebrafish. More promisingly, the HRP found in 2013 neonatal mice—our fellow mammals!—can also regenerate their lost inner ear cells.

Using the three animal models of the chicken, zebrafish, and mouse, the HRP's 15 senior scientists collaborate to work toward replicating this phenomenon in humans. By having almost immediate access to each other's data, HRP scientists are able to perform follow-up experiments much faster, rather than having to wait years until data is published.

A. James Hudspeth, M.D., Ph.D., the head of the Laboratory of Sensory Neuroscience at The Rockefeller University, New York, who was recently awarded the prestigious Kavli Prize in Neuroscience by the Norwegian Academy of Science, speaks highly of the HRP:

"During the past few decades, our understanding of the molecular and genetic causes of hearing loss has advanced to a remarkable extent...The HRP, an international consortium organized by HHF, expedites this process by providing financial support to pathfinding investigations. Perhaps even more importantly, the HRP promotes collaborations among hearing researchers, thus reducing redundant efforts and rapidly propagating new results through a larger community of investigators."

Dr. Hudspeth mentored the HRP's scientific director, Peter Barr-Gillespie, Ph.D., when they were postdoctoral fellows together at the University of California, San Francisco and the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center from 1988 to 1993.

Dr. Barr-Gillespie is confident the brilliant minds who comprise the HRP can complete the task at hand. "The question is not if we will regenerate hair cells in humans, but when," he remarks. The HRP consortium finds their time fragmented and resources limited, however. Support from individuals through Operation Regrow can help us achieve our shared goal, faster.

To make a tax-deductible donation to Hearing Health Foundation's Operation Regrow supporting groundbreaking investigations to cure hearing loss, you may do so in one of the following ways: Complete the online giving form at www.hhf.org/regrow
Download the print donation form at www.hhf.org/regrow and mail to:
Hearing Health Foundation 363 Seventh Ave 10th Floor New York, NY 1001
Call HHF during normal business hours (Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM EDT) at 212-257-6410

Gift matching concludes on Tuesday, June 19 at 11:59 PM EDT, so please be sure to make your contribution when it is still eligible to be matched. Thank you for your generosity.

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