$84K FUNDED IN RESEARCH THROUGH THE STURGE-WEBER FOUNDATION CATALYST RESEARCH PROGRAM

The Sturge-Weber Foundation Grant Review Committee has reviewed grant applications and has awarded $84,000 in research grants for 2022.

HOUSTON, TEXAS, USA, January 3, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Sturge-Weber Foundation (SWF) Grant Review Committee has reviewed three grant applications and has awarded $84,000 in research grants for 2022. Summaries of the grant applications are provided. This request is higher than in previous years, but the grants are novel and will provide invaluable insight for SWS and other vascular and capillary malformation conditions.

$38K AWARD
"Elucidating & modulating neurovascular interaction in a stem cell model of Sturge-Weber syndrome"
Nicole Schider, Ph.D. and Jan Pruszak, M.D.
Institute of Anatomy and Cell Biology Paracelsus Medical University (PMU), Salzburg, Austria

SUMMARY
Currently the effect of GNAQ mutation on SWS human nerve and blood vessel cells is understudied, and we need researchers to create better tools to understand this better. Dr. Pruszak's group are experts at creating one such tool called "induced pluripotent stem cells" (iPSCs) and have proposed creating GNAQ mutant cells to better study the SWS effects in skin and brain. This work has the potential to generate new insight into the basic biology of SWS and also provides a critical tool for early drug discovery efforts.

$40K AWARD
Prevalence of inflammatory cytokines and their association with glaucomatous pathologies in patients with Sturge Weber syndrome.
Principal Investigator: Uttio Roy Chowdhury, PhD,
Department of Ophthalmology
Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN
Co-Investigator: Elena Bitrian, MD
Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, University of Miami Health
System, Miami, FL
Co-Investigator:

Lauren Sasha Blieden, MD
Mentor: Michael P. Fautsch, PhD
Department of Ophthalmology
Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN

SUMMARY
Specific aim 1. Identify inflammatory cytokines in the aqueous humor of patients with Sturge-Weber Improving management of SWS associated glaucoma will provide a direct quality of life improvement for patients and families. Dr. Fautsch proposes a study of the eye fluid (aqueous humor) of SWS patients undergoing surgery for glaucoma in which his group will study a process called inflammation – currently thought to be a main contributor in glaucoma disease progression. This work may help to determine if SWS associated glaucoma is distinct from other forms of glaucoma and may be used to develop better treatment strategies and inform further understanding of SWS glaucoma biology.

$6,000 AWARD
Home measurement of intraocular pressure (IOP) in menstruating women
Benjamin J. Frankfort, M.D., Ph.D
Baylor College of Medicine

SUMMARY
Hypothesis: IOP is impacted by levels of female reproductive hormones and will therefore change according to time of menstrual cycle. These baseline data will constitute essential background for future projects that explore the impact of female hormonal changes in ocular diseases such as Sturge-Weber.

The SWF Catalyst Award Program accepts applications for research specific to SWS and other vascular malformation conditions August through September of each year. The SWF Grant Review Committee makes its decision in November and awards are announced and awarded in December.

For additional information on SWF, please visit their website at https://www.sturge-weber.org, or any of their social media platforms on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. You may also send an email of interest to: cso@sturge-weber.org. SWF is located at 11210 Steeplecrest Drive, Suite 120, Houston, TX 77065, 973-895-4445.

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