

# International Rett Syndrome Foundation Awards Record \$4.4M in Research Grants to Develop Rett Syndrome Breakthroughs

*Grants have been awarded to 13 scientific research teams around the globe.*

CINCINNATI, OHIO, UNITED STATES, January 31, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ --

The International Rett Syndrome Foundation (IRSF) today announced its largest annual investment to fund the next wave of Rett syndrome research, a milestone for the Foundation. Thirteen research teams were awarded over \$4.4 million to

further their work to develop curative treatments for Rett syndrome and expand the scientific understanding of the rare genetic neurological disorder. This commitment brings the total research investment by IRSF and its legacy foundation pioneers to more than \$58 million to date.

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This research advances toward our mission of helping every individual impacted by Rett syndrome. With our investment, we are changing the research landscape.”

*Dr. Dominique Pichard, IRSF Chief Science Officer*

“This research advances toward our mission of helping every individual impacted by Rett syndrome,” said Dominique Pichard, MD, IRSF Chief Scientific Officer. “With our investment, we are changing the research landscape. Our investment in these projects will get us closer to new drug options, expand genetic approaches, and improve clinical trial readiness and success.”

Rett syndrome occurs almost exclusively in girls (1 in 10,000 births), more rarely in boys, and leads to severe

impairments, affecting nearly every aspect of life. Rett syndrome is usually recognized in children between 6 to 18 months as they begin to miss developmental milestones or lose abilities they had gained, including their ability to speak, walk, eat, and even breathe.

“Our investments in Rett syndrome research are bringing cures closer than ever to families,” said IRSF Chief Executive Officer, Melissa Kennedy. “We have strategically invested in multiple,



International  
Rett Syndrome  
Foundation

International Rett Syndrome Foundation logo

promising areas of Rett research because we understand that one breakthrough will not help every person. Rett syndrome is complicated, and we need to have many treatment options available to families. We are grateful to the many generous donors and families who believe in our mission and made this investment possible. Together, we are making history.”

These multi-year awards provide funding to establish researchers in the field of Rett syndrome, expand research into therapeutic and genetic approaches to treat the disorder, and build the foundations for successful future clinical trials. The teams have expressed how impactful this funding will be to furthering the research they are already engaged in or getting ready to launch.

“Our goal is to improve the lives of those affected by Rett syndrome and their families through fundamental research, and I am very grateful to IRSF for providing the funding for this critical work,” said Qiang Chang, PhD, Professor of Medical Genetics and Neurology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and IRSF grant recipient. “Our project could make it possible to extract key molecular signatures that inform Rett’s onset and progression, guide future therapeutic development, and ultimately help families. This grant from IRSF reinforces the importance of the work our research team is doing.”

The full list of award recipients and their academic or research affiliations are provided below. Information about their research can be found on our website [here](#).

#### Researchers Paving the Path to New Drugs to Treat Rett Syndrome:

- Dr. Sameer Bajikar (Baylor College of Medicine)
- Drs. Qiang Chang, Andre Sousa, Daifeng Wang, and Xinyu Zhao (University of Wisconsin-Madison)
- Dr. Adam Hantman (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)
- Dr. Shixin Liu (The Rockefeller University)
- Dr. Yi Liu (Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research)
- Dr. Lee Niswander (University of Colorado Boulder)
- Dr. Hume Stroud (University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center)

#### Researchers Investigating Genetic Treatments as Curative Approaches:

- Dr. Vania Broccoli (San Raffaele Hospital)
- Dr. Ronald Emeson (Vanderbilt University)
- Dr. Sonia Guil (Josep Carreras Leukaemia Research Institute)
- Dr. Julian Halmai (University of California, Davis)
- Dr. Jeannie Lee (Massachusetts General Hospital)

#### Researchers Ensuring Clinical Trial Readiness and Success:

- Drs. Tim Benke and Talia Thompson (University of Colorado Denver), Drs. Cary Fu and Jeffrey Neul (Vanderbilt University), and Drs. Amitha Ananth and Alan Percy (University of Alabama)

## About International Rett Syndrome Foundation (IRSF)

As the leading Rett syndrome research and advocacy organization, the International Rett Syndrome Foundation (IRSF) builds upon its nearly 40-year commitment to breakthrough discoveries and life-changing advancements in research toward a cure while supporting families affected by Rett syndrome. Through its legacy foundation pioneers, IRSF has invested over \$58M in research leading to identifying Rett syndrome's cause, proving Rett syndrome is reversible in mice, and developing multiple clinical trials for Rett syndrome. IRSF fights for families living with Rett syndrome and a world without it. Learn more at [rettsyndrome.org](https://rettsyndrome.org).

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