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## **HUNTINGTON'S DISEASE SOCIETY OF AMERICA AWARDS FIVE HD HUMAN BIOLOGY PROJECT FELLOWSHIPS FOR 2018**

**New York, NY, October 23, 2018** -- Today, the Huntington's Disease Society of America (HDSA) announced that five research grants have been awarded under the Society's largest research initiative, the HDSA Huntington's Disease Human Biology Project. Totalling \$750,000, these grants represent HDSA's patient-centric research focus which brings basic and clinical researchers together to facilitate Huntington's disease (HD) science in the human condition, instead of in animal models, with the direct participation of people affected by HD.

"The HDSA HD Human Biology Project provides critical resources to scientists to allow us to better understand Huntington's disease in people," said George Yohrling, PhD, Senior Director, Mission and Scientific Affairs at HDSA. "Our 2018 fellows were selected because of their innovative proposals to pursue understudied lines of HD research. This year's fellows will expand our knowledge of HD by investigating topics such as protein clearance, huntingtin RNA and oligodendrocyte regulation, biomarker development and brain microRNA deficits in HD."

HDSA received applications from researchers all around the world. Ultimately, grants were awarded to five research fellows, from Canada, Denmark and the United States.

The winners and titles of the 2018 HDSA HD Human Biology Project Grants are:

- **Dr. Rossana Foti**, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of Copenhagen, Denmark: *Epigenetic dysregulation of oligodendrocyte differentiation and myelinogenesis in Huntington's disease, and its relationship to disease-associated neuropsychiatric pathology.*
- **Dr Richard Hickman**, Fellow in Neuropathology, Columbia University Medical Center: *Aberrations in autophagy in the human brain of Huntington's disease: a post-mortem study with correlation to murine models.*
- **Dr. Edith Pfister**, Instructor, University of Massachusetts Medical School: *Alternative polyadenylation of the human HTT mRNA and its effect on mutant HTT accumulation.*
- **Dr. Michael Placzek**, Instructor, Massachusetts General Hospital: *COX-2 PET radiotracers for imaging early HD pathology in the living brain.*
- **Dr. Isabelle St. Amour**, Postdoctoral Fellow, Université Laval: *Importance of microRNA biogenesis deficits in Huntington's disease.*

For a complete summary of these five research projects, please [click here](#).

“HDSA is proud to support these talented scientists who are bringing their curiosity and novel approaches into the HD field,” said Louise Vetter, Chief Executive Officer of HDSA. “We have no doubt that the insights gained from their work will advance HD science to turn today’s hope into tomorrow’s treatments.

Huntington’s disease is a fatal genetic disorder that causes the progressive breakdown of nerve cells in the brain. It deteriorates a person’s physical and mental abilities during their prime working years and has no cure. Each child of a parent with HD has a 50/50 chance of inheriting the faulty gene that causes Huntington’s disease. Today, there are approximately 30,000 symptomatic Americans and more than 200,000 at-risk of inheriting the disease. The symptoms of Huntington’s disease are described as having ALS, Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s – *simultaneously*.

The Huntington’s Disease Society of America is the premier nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of everyone affected by HD. From community services and education to advocacy and research, HDSA is the world’s leader in providing *help for today and hope for tomorrow* for people with HD and their families.

To learn more about Huntington’s disease and the work of the Huntington’s Disease Society of America, visit [www.hdsa.org](http://www.hdsa.org) or call 1-800-345-HDSA.

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