

EFIC-Grunenthal Grant 2007: The new generation of pain researchers

Aachen, Germany, 15 November, 2007. Today the European Federation of Chapters of the International Association for the Study of Pain (EFIC) and the pharmaceutical company Grunenthal GmbH award five young European scientists with grants to support innovative, exploratory research projects on clinical and human experimental pain research.

Overall 29 young researchers from eight countries across Europe applied for funds totaling € 100,000. The EFIC Research Committee, comprising internationally known pain specialists, has chosen the winners. Unlike typical research grants which are intended to support well established research groups with many years of experience behind them, the EFIC-Grunenthal Grants are intended for young investigators just beginning their research career. Focus is on novel ideas that have the potential for major advances in the understanding of pain mechanisms and the treatment of patients suffering from chronic pain, even if there is a risk of failure.

The winners of this year's EFIC-Grunenthal Grants, in the amount of € 20,000 per project, are:

Thomas Graven-Nielsen Ph.D., Aalborg University (DK): *Referred pain*, is a classical characteristic in musculoskeletal pain. His study will address factors potentially explaining why some subjects are predisposed to develop referred pain in contrast to others who are not.

Dieuwke Veldhuijzen Ph.D., University of Utrecht (NL). With functional magnetic resonance imaging she will investigate the role of autonomic nervous system dysfunction in *fibromyalgia* - a syndrome characterized by chronic widespread pain, tenderness to light touch, and a variety of other symptoms.

Valéry Legrain Ph.D., Université Catholique de Louvain, Brussels (B). The aim of this project is to study the organization of the *attentional processes* that modulate pain in the human brain, by combining behavioral and neurophysiological methods. The results may provide new information allowing the development and adaptation of psychotherapeutic techniques for patients to cope better with pain.

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Christian Netzer M.D., Cologne University (DE): His work is in the field of *migraine research*. He asks whether the likelihood of suffering from migraine headaches may be related to genetically determined variability in a specific neuropeptide signalling pathway of the central nervous system.

Markus Ploner M.D., Technical University Munich (DE): He will explore physiological correlates of the involuntary *attentional demands of pain*, which may degrade a person's ability to perceive and to make rational decisions during pain. Increases in the attentional demands of pain may also be involved in the development of chronic pain syndromes.

"Young investigators who won EFIC-Grunenthal Grants in 2007 will be carrying out research on a variety of intriguing questions", comments Prof. Marshall Devor, Ph.D., Chairman of the EFIC Research Committee and Professor at the Institute of Life Sciences and Centre for Research on Pain at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. "For example, fibromyalgia seriously degrades the quality of life of many patients. Two of these projects are looking into functional and psychological aspects that may underlie this and related chronic pain syndromes."

"EFIC and Grunenthal are now in the fourth year of the fruitful tradition of encouraging young European pain scientists in their ambitious work to help understand chronic pain and to provide relief to patients suffering from chronic pain. Both are highly committed to bringing to public awareness the realization that pain is a disease in its own right", comments Prof. Serdar Erdine, M.D., EFIC President and Director, Department of Algology, Faculty of Medicine at Istanbul University.

"Pain relief is more than just taking pain killers. Many patients suffering from pain have problems with carrying out their daily activities like taking care of their children, work and hobbies. Research such as this will help us to understand the mechanism of action behind pain symptoms, and hopefully to significantly improve the quality of life of pain patients", said Wolfgang Becker, Member of the Executive Board of Grunenthal GmbH". Moreover, improved treatment approaches will lower the overall disease related costs in the EU healthcare systems".

The application hotline for the next EFIC-Grunenthal Grant 2008 is open. More information is available at www.e-g-g.info.

Printable photo material for download at:

http://www.presseportal.de/link/R_D

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About EFIC

The European Federation of IASP Chapters (EFIC) is a multidisciplinary professional organization in the field of Pain Science and Medicine, made up of the 30 European chapters of IASP (the International Association for the Study of Pain). Established in 1993 by Prof. Ulf Lindblom, EFIC's 30 constituent chapters represent 33 countries and close to 18,000 scientists, physicians, nurses, physiotherapists, psychologists and other healthcare professionals across Europe, who study pain and treat patients in pain.

www.efic.org

About Grunenthal

Grunenthal is an expert in pain therapy and gynaecology and a pioneer in intelligent, user-friendly drug delivery technologies. Founded in 1946, the company employs 1,900 people in Germany and 4,800 worldwide. In 2006, Grunenthal achieved revenues of 813 million Euro. www.grunenthal.com

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