



THE MICHAEL J. FOUNDATION FOR
FOX PARKINSON'S
RESEARCH

For Immediate Release

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MICHAEL J. FOX FOUNDATION AWARDS \$1.9 MILLION FOR DEVELOPMENT OF NON-INVASIVE NEUROIMAGING TECHNIQUES IN LIVING BRAIN

NEW YORK, February 18, 2009 — The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research awarded approximately \$1.9 million total to six teams working to develop neuroimaging technologies that would allow scientists to non-invasively visualize the clumping of the alpha-synuclein protein in the living human brain. Such technologies would dramatically accelerate research into the cause, progression and treatment of PD. Investigators could more accurately identify individuals with PD as well as better characterize disease pathology and relate it to clinical measures of onset and progression. There is also growing interest in therapeutics that directly target alpha-synuclein; hence, a non-invasive imaging tool would be a useful therapeutic response marker for drug makers wishing to test biological impact of potentially disease-modifying drugs. Such tools would have a huge impact on clinical trial designs, allowing for more accurate patient selection and clearer trial outcome measures.

This program was funded with a lead gift from The Edmond J. Safra Foundation in memory of its founder, Mr. Edmond J. Safra. The Edmond J. Safra Foundation has been one of the most steadfast supporters of The Michael J. Fox Foundation since its inception.

Funded projects are listed below. Detailed information, including grant abstracts and researcher bios, is available on the Foundation's [Searchable Database of Funded Grants](#).

As with all MJFF grants, full funding is dependent on the achievement of predetermined, specific milestones and on researchers' agreement to make the results of their work available to the Parkinson's research community.

Development and Screening of Contrast Agents for In Vivo Imaging of PD

Brian Bacsikai, PhD, and Pamela McLean, PhD, Massachusetts General Hospital (Harvard Medical School), Boston, Massachusetts

Utility of the Amyloid Ligand [18F] FDDNP in Human PET Imaging in Parkinson's Disease

Yvette Bordelon, MD, PhD, University of California, Los Angeles

18F-labeled Alpha-Synuclein Ligands for PET Imaging of Lewy Bodies

Franz Hefti, PhD, Avid Radiopharmaceuticals, Inc., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Alan Snow, PhD, ProteoTech, Inc., Seattle, Washington

Generation of Alpha-Synuclein Conformation-specific Aptamers for In Vivo Bioimaging of Alpha-Synuclein Pathology

Poul Henning Jensen, MD, PhD, University of Aarhus, Aarhus, Denmark

A Strategy to Develop a Radiotracer Targeting Alpha-Synuclein

Kenneth Marek, MD, Institute for Neurodegenerative Disorders, New Haven, Connecticut, and Omar El-Agnaf, PhD, United Arab Emirates University

In Vivo SPECT Imaging of Synuclein Aggregation with Morphology-specific Antibody-based Ligands

Michael Sierks, PhD, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona

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About The Michael J. Fox Foundation

Founded in 2000, The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research is dedicated to ensuring the development of a cure for Parkinson's disease within the coming decade through an aggressively funded research agenda. The Foundation has funded about \$140 million in research to date.

About Edmond J. Safra

Considered by many to have been among the greatest bankers of his generation, Edmond J. Safra was also an extraordinary philanthropist. He contributed to countless

humanitarian, religious, educational and cultural causes the world over. He was deeply committed to the search for a cure for neurodegenerative diseases, in particular Parkinson's disease, and made the support of medical research in this field one of the key objectives when he established The Edmond J. Safra Foundation. He shared his devotion to this cause with his wife, Mrs. Lily Safra, a member of the Board of The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research and, since her husband's passing in 1999, Chairman of The Edmond J. Safra Foundation.