



## Dr. Bruce Richardson Selected as the Second Recipient of the Lupus Insight Prize

CHICAGO, IL (June 9, 2014) – **Bruce Richardson, M.D., Ph.D.**, of The University of Michigan, has been selected as the second recipient of the Lupus Insight Prize. The award provides \$200,000 for use in innovative research on lupus, an unpredictable and sometimes fatal autoimmune disease that affects an estimated 1.5 million Americans.

The Prize is a collaborative initiative among the [Alliance for Lupus Research \(ALR\)](#), the [Lupus Foundation of America \(LFA\)](#), and the [Lupus Research Institute \(LRI\)](#) to recognize and honor the achievements of an outstanding investigator in the field, and whose research efforts have a high likelihood of generating further advances in understanding of the causes, biology, treatments, or cure of lupus.

Dr. Richardson will receive the Prize on June 25 during a formal ceremony at [FOCIS 2014](#), the Annual Meeting of the Federation of Clinical Immunology Societies in Chicago, where scientists will present their findings on lupus and other diseases affecting the immune system.

Many researchers believe that lupus flares are triggered by environmental agents such as ultraviolet light, infections, silica exposure and cigarette smoking as well as certain drugs. How these agents cause lupus flares though, has been unclear. Dr. Richardson discovered that some lupus-causing drugs alter gene expression in normal “helper” lymphocytes, converting them into autoreactive “killer” lymphocytes that attack other cells and cause lupus in mice. He also found the same changes in gene expression in lymphocytes from patients with active lupus, and that many of the environmental agents implicated in lupus, as well as diet, contribute to the changes by altering gene expression. With the award funds, Dr. Richardson will identify the genes affected by these environmental agents, and determine how environmental agents and diet cause these changes in lymphocytes.

“I have dedicated my entire career to solving the problem of lupus. This award will enable me to take one of the most creative and innovative steps in my journey to have an impact on understanding and treating this difficult disease,” said Dr. Richardson in response to the award announcement. “I am tremendously honored to receive this award that has been initiated cooperatively by these three outstanding lupus advocacy and research organizations.”

Dr. Richardson was chosen to receive the Lupus Insight Prize by an independent review committee composed of leading lupus scientific leaders from across the country and representatives of the three lupus organizations. The selection committee based the award on a

variety of criteria, including academic achievements, creativity, insight, and potential for future advances that will improve the lives of people with lupus.

“I am thrilled to see the culmination of the collaborative efforts of the Alliance for Lupus Research, the Lupus Foundation of America, and the Lupus Research Institute on the development of this important prize with the selection of Bruce Richardson as the second recipient,” said Mary Crow, M.D., Chair of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Alliance for Lupus Research. “As we recognize Dr. Richardson's important insights into the impact of environment on the genome and immune function to characterize the immune system alterations that contribute to lupus, we can look forward to future advances that improve the lives of lupus patients,” she said.

Gary Gilkeson, M.D., Chair of the Lupus Foundation of America’s Medical-Scientific Advisory Council, noted the important contribution of Dr. Richardson’s work in expanding scientific understanding of lupus. “The origins of lupus are not well defined. Dr. Richardson’s work has provided a strong foundation from which further advances in the understanding and treatment of this very complex disease are being made.”

Lupus Research Institute’s Scientific Advisory Board member Peter Lipsky, M.D. commented, “The Lupus Insight Prize recognizes the novel insight of Dr. Richardson, who made the unexpected discovery that lupus-causing drugs change gene expression in immune cells. This insight provides a unique opportunity to develop new approaches for potential novel therapies for human lupus.”

Additional information about the Lupus Insight Prize and Dr. Richardson’s work in lupus are available online at [www.lupusinsightprize.org](http://www.lupusinsightprize.org).

### **About Lupus**

Lupus is a chronic autoimmune disease that causes inflammation and tissue damage to any organ system in the body. The health effects of lupus include heart attacks, strokes, seizures, organ failure, and possible death. An estimated 1.5 million Americans and at least five million people worldwide have lupus.

### **About the Funding Organizations**

For more information about the Alliance for Lupus Research, visit [www.lupusresearch.org](http://www.lupusresearch.org).

For more information about the Lupus Foundation of America, visit [www.lupus.org](http://www.lupus.org).

For more information about the Lupus Research Institute, visit [www.lupusresearchinstitute.org](http://www.lupusresearchinstitute.org).

### **About FOCIS**

FOCIS exists to improve human health through immunology by fostering interdisciplinary approaches to understand and treat immune-based diseases. [FOCIS 2014](#) is the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Federation of Clinical Immunology Societies in Boston, where scientists will present their findings on lupus and other diseases affecting the immune system. Thirty different specialties will be represented and over three hundred scientific papers will be presented.

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