

NIEHS funds six early-career researchers for innovative science

By Christine Bruske Flowers

New grants totaling \$3 million will go to six outstanding early-career scientists, bridging a funding gap to independent biomedical research. NIEHS created the highly competitive grant, known as the [Outstanding New Environmental Scientist \(ONES\)](#) award, in 2006 to encourage early stage researchers who want to discover how our environment influences human health.

The award is notable for funding emerging scientists, typically in their mid-30s. More often, scientists are awarded their first research grant around age 42.

“The ONES funding comes at a critical time in a research career when someone is trying to set up their own lab to pursue their unique ideas,” said Linda Birnbaum, Ph.D., NIEHS and National Toxicology Program director. “These early-career scientists are so innovative, and they inspire the entire research community. I believe this program will spur new biomedical research and lead to important medical breakthroughs.”

The 2015 ONES awardees will study connections between environmental exposures to arsenic, ozone, and other substances, and health problems, including cognitive function, asthma, and DNA damage.

“This talented group of awardees shows tremendous promise,” said Gwen Collman, Ph.D., who oversees all NIEHS grants as director of the Division of Extramural Research and Training. “We believe the ONES grant will provide a firm foundation for building a successful career.”



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Neel Aluru, Ph.D.

(<http://www.who.edu/page.do?pid=109916>)

, at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts, will use zebrafish models to study how early-life exposures to toxic chemicals may lead to developmental disabilities. (Photo courtesy of Neel Aluru)



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Kara Bernstein, Ph.D.

(<http://www.mmg.pitt.edu/node/764>)

, at the University of Pittsburgh, will study how errors in DNA repair lead to tumor growth, and how at-risk individuals may be more sensitive to DNA damage. (Photo courtesy of Joshua Franzos)

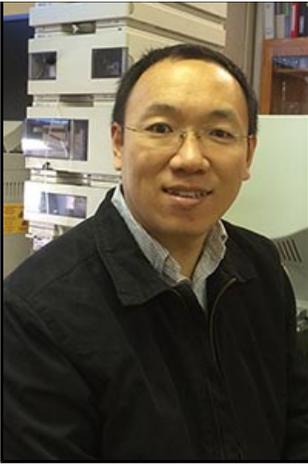


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Samir Kelada, Ph.D.

(<http://www.med.unc.edu/cfpulmcenter/about-us/faculty/samir-kelada-phd>)

, at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, will use innovative approaches to identify genes and pathways that play a role in the effect of ozone on asthma. (Photo courtesy of Samir Kelada)



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Kun Lu, Ph.D.

(https://www.publichealth.uga.edu/ehs/about/directory/faculty/kun_lu)

, at the University of Georgia, will study the interaction between the gut microbiome and arsenic, a widespread environmental pollutant and known human carcinogen. (Photo courtesy of University of Georgia)



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William Mack, M.D.

(http://keck.usc.edu/en/Education/Academic_Department_and_Divisions/Department_of_Neurology/Patient_Services_and_Clinical_Programs/Stroke_and_Cerebrovascular_Center/Faculty_and_Staff/Mack.aspx)

at the University of Southern California, will research how particulate matter exposure can be toxic to blood vessels in the brain, and identify risks to cognitive health in vulnerable populations. (Photo courtesy of William Mack)



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Dana Miller, Ph.D.

(<http://depts.washington.edu/biowww/pages/faculty-Miller.shtml>)

at the University of Washington, will explore the long-term effects of toxic substances on basic physiology. (Photo courtesy of BethAnn McLaughlin)

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