ISHR Outstanding Investigator Award

The purpose of this award is to recognize an outstanding scientist who (i) is making major and independent contributions to the advancement of cardiovascular science, and (ii) is leading a growing research program likely to play a major role in the future. The main criteria for selecting awardees are scientific excellence, independence, and potential for future research contributions. While the Peter Harris Award recognizes lifelong accomplishments and the Richard Bing Award recognizes young investigators, the Outstanding Investigator Award (presented annually) is targeted at established investigators who are in the intermediate phase of their academic career.

In non-Congress years, the Outstanding Investigator Award is presented at the meeting of the ISHR Section to which the winner belongs. The winner presents a major lecture and receives a $5,000 honorarium and a plaque. An announcement of this Award is published in Heart News and Views, and posted in the ISHR website. The winner receives free registration and reimbursement for travel expenses (up to a maximum of $1500 when the recipient delivers the lecture at his/her local Section meeting, and $3,000 when inter-continental travel is required).

Nominations for the Outstanding Investigator Award are sought by the Secretary General from members of the International Council, members of the Editorial Board of the Journal of Molecular and Cellular Cardiology, and the Councils of ISHR Sections. In addition, the Secretary General publishes an open invitation in the ISHR Website for members to submit nominations.

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Award Winner

Dr. Deepak Srivastava

“Direct Cardiac Reprogramming: From Developmental Biology to Regeneration”
Dr. Deepak Srivastava is the Younger Family Director and a Senior Investigator at the Gladstone Institute of Cardiovascular Disease and Director of the Roddenberry Stem Cell Center at Gladstone. At the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), Dr. Srivastava is also a Professor in the Departments of Pediatrics, and Biochemistry & Biophysics, and is the Wilma and Adeline Pirag Distinguished Professor in Pediatric Developmental Cardiology.

Dr. Srivastava’s laboratory revealed how chamber-specific gene networks are established at the transcriptional level and are integrated with signaling pathways. His laboratory used human genetics to demonstrate that a decrease in dosage of some of these cardiac developmental regulators can cause human cardiac septal defects and valve disease, and is now using induced pluripotent stem cells to discover the mechanisms of disease in these patients. In studying the regulation of gene dosage, his lab described the first known biological role of a microRNA in the mammalian system, ultimately revealing a network of microRNAs that titrate the dose of key cardiac gene networks that dictate cell fate and differentiation. Dr. Srivastava’s lab has leveraged the body of knowledge from cardiac developmental biology to reprogram non-muscle cells in the mouse heart directly into cells that function like heart muscle cells, effectively regenerating heart muscle after damage. This new paradigm of harnessing endogenous cells to regenerate organs may be broadly applicable.

Such approaches to understand human disease promise to yield new therapies. Dr. Srivastava has co-founded a biotechnology company to help find new cures for many human diseases and one of the developmental genes whose role he discovered, Thymosin β4, is currently in clinical trials for patients suffering ischemic damage to the heart.

Before joining Gladstone in 2005, Dr. Srivastava was a Professor in the Department of Pediatrics and Molecular Biology at the University of Texas Southwestern (UTSW) Medical Center in Dallas. He has received numerous honors and awards, including endowed chairs at both UTSW and UCSF, as well as election to the American Society for Clinical Investigation, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Dr. Srivastava’s laboratory has trained more than 45 postdoctoral fellows and graduate students.

Dr. Srivastava completed his undergraduate degree at Rice University, medical training at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston and his residency in the Department of Pediatrics at UCSF. He also did a fellowship in pediatric cardiology at the Children’s Hospital of Harvard Medical School and a postdoctoral fellowship at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, before joining the faculty at UTSW in 1996.

Previous Award Winners....

Thomas Eschenhagen, M.D. (Belgrade, Serbia: 2012)
Jeffrey D. Molkentin, Ph.D. (Kyoto, Japan: 2010)
Mathias Gautel, M.D., Ph.D. (Nice, France: 2009)
Joseph Loscalzo, M.D. (Toronto, ON: 2006)
Eric Olson, Ph.D. (New Orleans, LA: 2005)
Issei Komuro, M.D., Ph. D. (Tokyo, Japan: 2003)
Peter Carmeliet, M.D., Ph.D. (Szeged, Hungary: 2002)