



## **Lyme Research Alliance Awards Nearly \$648,000 in New Grants**

*LRA receives record number of grant applications to advance Lyme disease research. Funds seven promising studies to find a reliable diagnostic test and effective treatment options for Lyme and other tick-borne diseases.*

[Lyme Research Alliance](#) (LRA), the nation's largest private non-profit funder of Lyme disease research at universities, today announced the awarding of seven grants worth \$587,000 to researchers focused on the identification, treatment and cure for Lyme and other tick-borne diseases.

LRA noted it had received the most applications in its history—over 20 grant proposals—a 100 percent increase from last year.

“While we were pleased to receive so many solid applications from talented scientists this year, it underscores the fact that only 17 percent of grant applications receive funding from the government these days,” said Harriet Kotsoris, M.D., LRA’s Chief Scientific Officer. “Scientific research is severely underfunded by the government and scientists must go to private donors.”

The resulting LRA 2014-2015 grant portfolio is “outstanding,” she said. “These scientists are at the top of their game. This speaks to the importance of LRA in the Lyme disease research community and the critical role played by private funding.”

The seven grants were awarded to: Armin Alaedini, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine at Columbia University Medical Center, New York; John N. Aucott, M.D., Assistant Professor, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Baltimore, MD; Nichole Baumgarth, D.V.M, Ph.D., Professor of Pathology, Microbiology & Immunology, University of California, Davis, CA; Charles Chiu, M.D., Ph.D., Assistant Professor in Laboratory Medicine and Medicine, Infectious Diseases at the University of California, San Francisco, CA; A.T. Charlie Johnson, Ph.D., Professor of Physics and Astronomy, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, Kim Lewis, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor and Director, Antimicrobial Discovery Center, Northeastern University, Boston, MA; Steven Schutzer, M.D., Professor, Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care and Allergy/Immunology, Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, Newark, NJ along with Clare Fraser, Ph.D., University of Maryland.

The grants reflect LRA’s scientific agenda: the discovery of an accurate and accessible diagnostic test, and the development of effective treatments for long-term or “chronic” Lyme disease. LRA grantees are also expected to publish their findings in peer-reviewed scientific journals, the forum for knowledge-sharing across the scientific community.

The researchers were selected following a rigorous evaluation process using guidelines established by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Each proposal was evaluated by Grant Review Committee members of LRA’s Scientific Advisory Board and met the same scientific standards that the NIH applies to its own research grant review process. The resulting 2014-2015 grant awards represent projects judged to have exceptional prospects of delivering measurable advances.

Innovative efforts in the most promising areas of tick-borne disease research are supported by LRA. Together with Bay Area Lyme Foundation, for instance, LRA has funded Dr Johnson for his work on developing a fast,

accurate, affordable diagnostic test via nanotechnology, the multidisciplinary science that looks at how matter can be manipulated at the molecular and atomic level. Dr. Johnson, along with Dr. Dustin Brisson and his University of Pennsylvania team, is focusing on a technique that uses single-layered molecular graphene sheets—attached to antibodies that react with specific proteins carried by the bacteria responsible for Lyme disease.

Lyme disease is the most common vector-borne disease in the U.S. with some 300,000 new cases reported in the U.S. each year. The number of Lyme cases reported annually has increased nearly 25-fold since national surveillance began in 1982. There are no accurate diagnostic tests for the tick-borne disease, no tests to prove that Lyme bacteria are eradicated or that an individual is cured. Some 15-20 percent of individuals with Lyme end up with long term health problems.

In announcing the new grants, Dr. Kotsoris said, “As the number of Lyme and tick-borne disease cases continue to grow, there is a tremendous need to keep science moving forward. LRA is proud to support the advanced research being conducted by some of the best and the brightest men and women in the field today. Through their work, we believe there will be scientific breakthroughs in prevention strategies, diagnosis and treatment, leading to a cure for Lyme.”

#### ABOUT LYME RESEARCH ALLIANCE:

For more than a decade LRA, formerly Time for Lyme, has funded innovative research at universities across the United States, from Northeastern University to Johns Hopkins, Washington University and Texas A&M, just to name a few. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, LRA has raised over \$9 million to combat Lyme and other tick-borne diseases.

---

Lyme Research Alliance, formerly Time for Lyme, is a Connecticut-based, national non-profit that funds cutting-edge research into Lyme and other tick-borne diseases. For more information go to <http://www.LymeResearchAlliance.org>.



**Contact Information**

**Peter Wild**

Lyme Research Alliance

<http://www.lymeresearchalliance.org>

203-448-8801

**Rona Cherry**

Rona Cherry Associates

212-586-0917