

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First IDF Research Grant Awarded

Towson, MD (February 22, 2017) – The Immune Deficiency Foundation (IDF) is pleased to announce that the first IDF Research Grant has been awarded to Sonia Sharma, PhD of La Jolla Institute for Allergy and Immunology. The IDF Research Grant was established in 2015 to help fund research to improve the diagnosis, treatment and quality of life of persons living with primary immunodeficiency diseases (PI).

Sonia Sharma, PhD is an Assistant Professor in the Division of Cellular Biology at La Jolla Institute for Allergy and Immunology and Director of the Functional Genomics Center in La Jolla, CA. Dr. Sharma leverages her strong background in innate immunity and functional genomics to study the emerging importance of cell-intrinsic innate immune responses to infection and cancer. Her research focuses on using unbiased, genome-scale RNAi and CRISPR/Cas9 approaches to further understand type I interferon signaling. She integrates cutting-edge genetics, biochemistry, cell biology, computational and translational approaches to define the key genetic mechanisms regulating cellular innate immunity, and determine how they impact human health and disease.

Dr. Sharma's research application focused on the link between XMEN disease and potential defects in innate immunity. Individuals with XMEN immunodeficiency are prone to persistent infections from various bacteria and viruses – the impact of this disease on the immune system are not yet fully understood. Dr. Sharma intends to use the grant from IDF to further advance the research and hopes it leads to new understandings and treatment options. "Every penny is going into the study of the disease," says Dr. Sharma. Dr. Sharma's team includes a researcher who has experience with immunology, pathological immunity, and cancer immunity. "It's really who is sitting at the bench – someone who is specialized in immune cells."

"It felt right," said Dr. Sharma when speaking about why she applied for a grant through IDF.

IDF was able to create this research grant from funds raised through IDF Walk for Primary Immunodeficiency, a national initiative in which walks are held in cities across the country and supported by thousands of generous participants and sponsors, raising more than \$2 million since 2013.

The first round of grants is now closed, but IDF will be offering another research grant and inviting applicants to submit requests in 2017/2018. If you have questions or would like to submit a grant, please contact IDF at IDFGrant@primaryimmune.org or 800-296-4433.

About the Immune Deficiency Foundation

The Immune Deficiency Foundation (IDF), founded in 1980, is the national non-profit patient organization dedicated to improving the diagnosis, treatment and quality of life of persons with primary immunodeficiency diseases through advocacy, education and research.

There are approximately 250,000 people who have been diagnosed with a primary immunodeficiency disease in the U.S. IDF provides programs, services and publications for patients and families as well as for healthcare professionals caring for those living with primary immunodeficiency diseases. IDF works to address patient needs through public policy programs by focusing on issues such as insurance reimbursement, patient confidentiality, ensuring safety and availability of immunoglobulin therapy, and maintaining and enhancing patient access to treatment options.

About La Jolla Institute

La Jolla Institute for Allergy and Immunology is dedicated to understanding the intricacies and power of the immune system so that we may apply that knowledge to promote human health and prevent a wide range of diseases. Since its founding in 1988 as an independent, nonprofit research organization, the Institute has made numerous advances leading towards its goal: life without disease®.