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LJI researcher Sujan Shresta makes the Rodale 100 list
The list honors trailblazing innovators who make the world a better place

LA JOLLA, CA— La Jolla Institute for Allergy and Immunology is proud to announce that Sujan Shresta, Ph.D., an associate professor in the Institute’s Center for Infectious Disease, has been named to the first ever RODALE 100 list. The inaugural list honors unique accomplishments and innovative ideas that are transforming health and wellness, fitness, social outreach, food, and the environment.

Dr. Shresta has been recognized for her pioneering discoveries that proved instrumental to the development of a dengue vaccine and novel therapies to treat dengue fever. Dengue is a mosquito-borne disease and affects an estimated 390 million people annually. It can cause a spectrum of clinical disease running the gamut from relatively mild dengue fever to dengue hemorrhagic fever and potentially fatal dengue shock syndrome. Over the past few decades, dengue-carrying mosquitoes have rapidly expanded beyond their established territories and recently reached Southern Europe and the continental United States.

"For the past 70 years, efforts to develop a dengue vaccine have focused on eliciting a strong antibody response, which traditionally served as a gauge to measure the efficacy of vaccines,” said Dr. Shresta. “But for dengue, even the most promising vaccines candidates are showing limited efficacy. Now, in part due to our work, vaccine developers are switching gears and are focusing on developing vaccines that induce a strong T cell response in addition to antibody-producing B cells to provide protective immunity.”

Dr. Shresta, who was born and raised in Nepal, is equally driven by a passion for research and compassion for the people whose lives her discoveries impact. When two massive earthquakes struck Nepal in May 2015, she didn’t hesitate to volunteer her dengue expertise to help her home country to identify, prevent, and control dengue outbreaks especially after the earthquake.

Dengue recently made its way from India to Nepal but the resource-poor country does not have enough health care and epidemiological workers with dengue expertise to meet the challenge nor the equipment and supplies to control the vector mosquito, *Aedes aegypti*. To increase the nation’s cadre of dengue experts, Dr. Shresta started a collaboration with health authorities in Nepal and invited Nepali scientists to her lab at La Lolla Institute to help them acquire the virologic and immunologic skills needed to define the epidemiology of dengue infection in Nepal.
Last October, Krishna Manandhar, Ph.D., a professor at Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu, the country’s premier research university, joined Dr. Shresta’s laboratory for a period of nine months through the Fulbright Senior Research Scholar Exchange Program. He is working on serum samples from patients diagnosed with dengue disease prior to the earthquake. During the same time period, colleagues in Nepal will collect samples from suspected dengue cases in 2015/2016 and process them at the La Jolla Institute to monitor viral spread and gain valuable data to fight future outbreaks.

“Dengue virus is rapidly moving from tropical to temperate climate zones and Nepal with its varied terrain within a small geographical area provides a unique opportunity to study the spread of the virus,” says Dr. Manandhar, who plans to start up his own dengue research program at Tribhuvan University. “If this collaboration leads to the discovery of new insights into dengue pathogenesis due to the unique ecological niche in Nepal, our work could serve as a great model system that helps humankind."

"Infectious disease knows no geographic boundaries and half the world's population is now at risk for dengue," Dr. Shresta said. "Knowing that my research may contribute to the development of a successful dengue vaccine that prevents disease and suffering around the globe and particularly in Nepal, where I was born and spent my childhood years, gives me a tremendous sense of accomplishment and satisfaction."

About Rodale Inc.
Known for launching the organic movement in the United States in 1942, Rodale Inc. has been at the forefront of groundbreaking ideas in the health and wellness universe for nearly 75 years. “We’ve been in the business of helping people discover happier, healthier ways to live their lives since my grandfather J.I. Rodale launched our first publication in 1942,” said Maria Rodale, the company’s chairman and CEO, in an official statement. “Our company was born of individuals with radical ideas and pioneering souls, so we wanted to develop the Rodale 100 to spotlight the next generation of visionaries whose work aligns with the Rodale mission.”

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®.