

LEO Pharma Research Awards: the Danish Minister of Health Presents the Gold and Silver Prizes

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On 19 November 2008 the Danish Minister of Health and Prevention, Jakob Axel Nielsen, presented two new research awards totalling DKK 1.5 million on behalf of the LEO Research Foundation. LEO Pharma Research Foundation awarded prizes to Lars Norlén and William Agace for their research in the fields of dermatology and immunology, respectively.

Lars Olsen, Executive Vice President, Research and Development, LEO Pharma said: "It is our hope that this funding will help to promote the completion of the important research carried out by the two award winners, which could ultimately lead to improved therapies for sick people".

Gold Prize – Lars Norlén

The LEO Pharma Research Foundation's Gold Prize was awarded to the Swedish researcher, biophysicist and clinical dermatologist Lars Norlén, Stockholm. He and his team are developing new advanced biophysical measuring methods to describe the molecular structure of the skin barrier.

Lars Norlén has always been fascinated by skin – both normal and pathological skin functions at the molecular level. In a

grateful acceptance speech he stated: "My goal is to contribute to a molecular understanding of skin diseases and their treatments and it is hoped that this research will help to design more specific and efficient drugs for clinical dermatology". The award of DKK 1,000,000 (€134,186) will have an enormous impact as it will encourage long-term scientific planning and risk taking.

Silver Prize – William Agace

The Silver Prize was awarded to Professor William Agace, Lund. Together with his research team William has spent several years studying the underlying control mechanisms for the processes behind the generation and movement of so-called lymphocytes in the intestines, and has identified the factors that determine which are activated and where they go in the intestinal system.



Fig. 1. Lars Norlén (left), Danish Minister of Health and Prevention, Jakob Axel Nielsen (middle) and William Agace (right). Photograph by Ebbe Forup.

He stated: "A deeper understanding of these processes will be an important step forward in our ability to modulate intestinal immune responses for mucosal vaccine development and the treatment of intestinal pathology". William Agace enjoys being part of an innovative and serious scientific environment surrounded by talented young people. He will therefore spend the DKK 500,000 (€67,093) grant on personnel and expenses for experiments with micro-array and tiling arrays.

Minister supports research

The award ceremony was held at the Panum Institute in Copenhagen, during which the prize winners each gave a brief lecture. In his speech, the Danish Minister of Health and Prevention emphasized the importance of encouraging research and providing financial support – as the LEO Pharma Research Foundation has done with these awards. The Minister stated: "The research is important for new drugs to be developed for the benefit of patients and society".

Continuing Medical Education

CME MCQ – Overview of Lupus in Woman:

The following questions are based on the Educational Review in *Forum for Nordic Dermato-Venereology 2008, Vol. 13, No. 4; Filippa Nyberg: Overview of Lupus in Woman.*

1. Autoimmune diseases affect approximately 8% of the population – how many of the affected are women ?
 - A. 38 %
 - B. 48 %
 - C. 58 %
 - D. 68 %
 - E. 78 %
 - F. 88 %
2. Prevention, pregnancy and childbirth:
A common clinical question is whether patients with stable lupus should receive oestrogen-containing contraceptives. Based on a recent publication the author concludes that:
 - A. Contraceptives should be avoided.
 - B. Contraceptives do not increase the risk of flare of disease.
 - D. Oestrogen-containing contraceptives may be beneficial for women with SLE.
 - E. Women with SLE and a contraceptive need should receive a progestin-only pill.
3. Comorbidity should be considered in lupus. Indicate conditions that have been associated with lupus:
 - A. Artherosclerosis.
 - B. Low levels of vitamin D.
 - C. Elevated levels of HPV-16 and abnormal cervical cytology.
 - D. Tuberculosis.
 - E. High blood pressure.

1. E.
2. B.
3. A, B, C, D, and E. Tuberculosis (D) and high blood pressure (E) are not specifically mentioned in the article.

Recommended answers: