



THE BACHMANN-STRAUSS Dystonia & Parkinson Foundation, Inc.

Contact: Christina Pepi
cpepi@bsdpf.org
(212)682-9900

The Bachmann-Strauss Foundation Announces Two Major Scientific Grants, Potentially Transforming the Landscape for Dystonia Patients

New York, NY (August 2, 2012): [The Bachmann-Strauss Dystonia & Parkinson Foundation](#) Scientific Advisory Board has awarded two interrelated grants, totaling \$330,000 over two years. The first grant was awarded to H.A. Jinnah, MD, PhD, Professor, neurology, human genetics and pediatrics, [Emory University](#), and the second to Christopher Bragg, PhD Assistant Professor of Neurology, [Massachusetts General Hospital](#).

Dr. Jinnah's project - the [Dystonia Coalition](#) iPS Resource - focuses on developing a resource for the collection of skin samples for making fibroblast cultures for dystonia, creating [stem cells](#) from these fibroblasts to share with dystonia investigators, and examining the defects in these cells after they are converted into dopamine neurons.

Using new technology to study neurons of different motor pathways, Dr. Jinnah explained, "This involves taking a small skin sample from patients with dystonia, growing living fibroblasts from the skin, and then converting the fibroblasts into stem cells for making neurons." As these cells are made from the skin samples of dystonia patients, they will contain the genetic defects responsible for the disorder.

Dr. Bragg's project - Generating Isogenic Dystonia iPS Cell lines with Custom TALE Nucleases (TALEN) - will collaborate with the Jinnah laboratory in developing dystonia iPS cells. Directly comparing TALEN-generated iPSC lines to ones generated by reprogramming patient fibroblasts can provide considerable useful information. Funding provided by [The Bachmann-Strauss Foundation](#) will support efforts to derive iPSCs by different methods. The work will take place over the next two years and will proceed in parallel with Dr. Jinnah's lab.

In seeking proposals from extraordinary researchers like Drs. Jinnah and Bragg, Ted Dawson, MD, PhD, Chair, The Bachmann-Strauss Foundation Scientific Advisory Board, explained, "In previously unexplored areas, the Board looks for innovative projects like these that have the potential to lead to new tools or new directions for future treatments in [dystonia and Parkinson's disease](#)."

The Bachmann-Strauss Dystonia & Parkinson Foundation was established in 1995 to find better treatments and cures for the movement disorders dystonia and Parkinson's disease and to provide medical and patient information. Bonnie

Strauss, Foundation Founder and President, said, "In the past 20 years, the Foundation has given \$12 million to fund 217 grants, enabling researchers to explore their most promising hypotheses."

For further information, visit <http://www.dystonia-parkinson.org>