Dear friends, colleagues, mentors and supporters,

Welcome to the first March of Dimes Monthly Research Brief: a monthly e-mail about our news, podcasts, grants, blogs and publications. We have a lot going on, and we want you to know. You are receiving this briefing because we thought you might be interested - but if you don't want to receive these e-mails anymore, please respond to this e-mail with the subject line 'Unsubscribe.'

And now, the August Research Brief:

NEWS

Recently, we launched a monthly research podcast called MODCAST. Our first episode features March of Dimes Chief Scientific Officer Dr. Emre Sali discussing our motivation to start a podcast and our greater research vision at MOD. Our second episode, posted in mid-July, features Dr. Marina Sirota from our University of California San Francisco Prematurity Research Center (PRC) discussing how machine learning experts from around the world used data from thousands of PRCs to make predictive models for preterm birth. Listen to both episodes here.

Find and follow subscribe to the podcast on Spotify, SoundCloud or Google.

AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT

We are calling for nominations for the annual March of Dimes, Richard B. Johnston Jr. Prize. This honor outstanding scientists who profoundly advance our understanding of pregnancy, parturition and preterm development. The award will be presented at the SRI meeting in Vancouver, March 2024.

To learn more click here. Nominations close October 6, 2023.

MOD RESEARCH BLOG

The data vault behind the recent microbiome DREAM Challenge launched by the UCSF PRC-the challenge is the focus of our second podcast episode-is the subject of our most recent blog. The Modl Database for Preterm Birth Research is a bank of every piece of maternal data that has come out of a PRC, comprising more than 450,000 experimental samples. Headed by Dr. Marina Sirota, it is the only public multi-omic data repository for preterm birth, and underscores March of Dimes’ commitment to open science - just like the microbiome DREAM Challenge that saw the creation of two predictive models for preterm birth risk.

To read the biopostery blog featuring Dr. Marina Sirota, click here.

Separately, scientists at the March of Dimes PRC at Stanford University have added a new study to the growing body of evidence suggesting maternal smoking has a long-term impact on fetal development. In this study, Dr. Jonas Miller, now at the University of Connecticut, who found that the stress a woman experiences before pregnancy affects the way their child’s brain functions across three to five years old. To read the blog featuring Dr. Jonas Miller, click here.

NEWest PUBLICATIONs

Our scientists have recently published their work, here's a small sample:

A functional mechanism for a non-coding variant near AGTR2 associated with risk for preterm birth. 
https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/39439503/ - Ohio Collaborative PRC; Published July 2023

SARS-CoV-2 influx in human placenta revealed by spatial transcriptomics. 

Persistent Bacterial Vaginosis and Risk for Spontaneous Preterm Birth. 

Women’s Economic Mobility and Small for Gestational Age Births: The Effect of Maternal Early-Life Socioeconomic Position. 

https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/3678526/ - Penn PRC; published May 2023

Explaining the Link Between Maternal Socioeconomic Position and Small for Gestational Age Birth: The Effect of Maternal Unhealthy Behaviors. 

That’s it for the August Research Brief. We hope you enjoy.

Emre Sali, MD