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Dear Supporter:

It's March, spring is officially here, and your research brief is below.



# Monthly Research Brief

## News

The March of Dimes Innovation Fund, a venture fund focused on investing in mission-aligned, early-stage companies, has developed a white paper. It establishes our point of view regarding needs in our focus areas and the types of investments we are seeking.

[Review the white paper and consider sharing it with those who may have an interest in the Innovation Fund.](#)

## Grants and awards

We just [announced Dr. Jose Villar as the winner of this year's Agnes Higgins Award in Maternal-Fetal Nutrition](#), which means it's time to open the nomination process for the 2025 award. As a subscriber to this brief, you learn about nomination and award dates early, so mark your calendars: we'll accept nominations for the 2025 Agnes Higgins Award from April 8 to August 9. [Find out more information about the award and the nomination process.](#)

Separately, we opened the Request for Applications (RFA) for the Basil

O'Connor Starter Scholar Research Awards last month. We will be accepting applications through May 31, 2024. [For more information about the award and application process, visit our portal.](#)

## Blog

Curious why progesterone only helps some women slow or prevent preterm birth? So were our Stanford Prematurity Research Center (PRC) and University of California San Francisco scientists, who may have discovered why the drug only works for some women. [Our latest blog details their recent paper that found common mutations in uterine muscle genes to be the likely reason the hormone isn't universally effective.](#)

## Podcast

The research finding in our latest podcast is a bit of a shocker: not all breast milk is protective against necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC). Dr. Tim Hand, a March of Dimes researcher at the University of Pittsburgh, reveals that some breast milk antibodies don't bind (and thus don't disarm) the bacteria that causes NEC, a life-threatening preterm birth-related condition that affects babies born before 32 weeks. [Listen to our latest episode of MODCAST.](#)

## Publications

[Targeting phenylalanine assemblies as a prospective disease-modifying therapy for phenylketonuria](#)

[Lifetime Upward Economic Mobility and US-Born Latina Women's Preterm Birth Rates](#)

[Antidepressant use during pregnancy and the risk of preterm birth—a cohort study](#)

That's it for March. See you in April.

Dr. Emre Seli  
Chief Scientific Advisor  
March of Dimes

**HEALTHY  
MOMS.  
STRONG  
BABIES.**



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