

Dear Supporter,

It's October. Here's your brief.



# Monthly Research Brief

## News

Yesterday, we announced the winners of our Basil O'Connor Starter Scholar Research Awards:

- Dr. Emily Partridge, a pediatric and fetal surgeon at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) and an assistant professor of surgery at the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Partridge's work will build upon her existing research to advance the artificial womb for extremely preterm babies by adding a process called liquid ventilation to the existing breathing mechanism in the support system.
- Dr. Hojun Li, a pediatric hematologist and assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of California, San Diego. Dr. Li will continue his work on the creation of a simple, portable, and effective test that will identify newborns with sickle cell anemia in sub-Saharan Africa so they can seek medical care and extend their lifespans.

Each physician-scientist received a \$150,000 grant to advance their research. [Read the press release to learn more.](#)

## Awards

Earlier this month, 2016 March of Dimes Richard B. Johnston, Jr. MD Prize winners Dr. Victor Ambros and Dr. Gary Ruvkun were awarded the 2024 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for their discovery of microRNA, or miRNA. Dr. Ambros, a molecular medicine professor at UMass Chan Medical School, and Dr. Ruvkun, a genetics professor at Harvard Medical School and a researcher at Massachusetts General Hospital, discovered that these tiny molecules regulate genes and influence the growth of cells, including embryonic cells whose behavior could result in birth defects. This same miRNA discovery earned the pair the March of Dimes Prize. Separately, in 1985, Dr. Ambros was chosen as a Basil O'Connor Starter Scholar Research Award grantee. In total, 23 March of Dimes scientists have won the Nobel prize. [Learn more about Dr. Ambros and Dr. Ruvkun's Nobel Prize.](#)

## Blog

This month's blog details a paper from March of Dimes researchers in Denmark who found that women with vegan diets during pregnancy may have a higher risk of having a baby with a lower birth weight than omnivorous moms and may also be at increased risk of developing preeclampsia. Two of the reasons for the lower birth weight finding, the scientists hypothesize, may be the lower protein and micronutrient intake sometimes associated with vegan diets. [Check out our latest blog.](#)

## Podcast

Our latest MODCAST features one of our most valuable internal players: March of Dimes Senior Director of Research Operations Jonathan Cherry. He discusses our research grants and lifetime awards, as well as the objectivity of the winner selection process, ease of applying, and the underlying themes grant proposals should focus on. [Watch or listen to the latest podcast now.](#)

## Publications

[Inclusive measure development: amplifying the voices of adolescents and young adults with spina bifida in a new measure of benefit-finding and growth](#)

[Glycomics of cervicovaginal fluid from women at risk of preterm birth reveals immuno-regulatory epitopes that are hallmarks of cancer and viral glycosylation](#)

[Associations between Parenting and Cognitive and Language Abilities at 2 Years of Age Depend on Prenatal Exposure to Disadvantage](#)

That's it for this month. See you in November, and if you celebrate, Happy Halloween.

Dr. Emre Seli  
Chief Scientific Advisor  
March of Dimes

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STRONG  
BABIES.**



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