

**Press Release**

**Dubai Harvard Foundation for Medical Research (DHFMR) Announces Grants for Two Teams of Collaborative Researchers from Middle East Region**

*Two Research Fellowship Awards Also Announced*

**Dubai: XX January, 2008** – The Dubai Harvard Foundation for Medical Research (DHFMR), an entity in the recently launched Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Academic Medical center at Dubai Healthcare City, a member of Tatweer today announced annual grants of US\$350,000 each for two research teams under its Collaborative Research Programme. In addition, the DHFMR also launched two Research Fellowship Awards to post-doctoral researchers from the Middle East region.

Under the Collaborative Research Programme, DHFMR is funding researchers who have demonstrated exceptional ability to generate knowledge and novel approaches to medical, biomedical or translational research, relevant to the Middle East region. Effective from January 2008, the grants will enable recipients to build on established collaborations between research laboratories at Harvard Medical School and Middle East-based counterparts with the goal of ultimately forming independent regional research institutions.

The two Research Fellowship Awards have been granted to post-doctoral researchers from the Middle East region currently in the early stages of their research career. Recipients will work for up to three years under the guidance and mentorship of Harvard Medical School faculty.

All research award applications undergo a peer-review process by an *ad hoc* Review Committee who makes its recommendation to the Scientific Advisory

Committee, comprised of members based at Harvard Medical School (HMS) and academic medical centres in the Middle East. Acting on the advice of both committees, the Chair of the Board of Trustees notifies successful award recipients.

The DHFMR Collaborative Research Center Awards are open to research programs, laboratories and centers at HMS and in the Middle East Region while the DHFMR Research Fellowships are available to qualified post-doctoral researchers from the Middle East Region. The criteria and eligibility requirements for the 2008 award cycle along with an application form will be posted on the DHFMR website [www.dhfmr.hms.harvard.edu](http://www.dhfmr.hms.harvard.edu) in the spring of 2008.

Ahmad Sharaf, a member of the board of the foundation and Senior Vice President Healthcare & Energy, Tatweer, said: "In its endeavour to create an international hub for healthcare research and education, Dubai Healthcare City has once again reiterated its commitment to stimulate individual and group research. This new initiative will further enhance the quality of medical services in the region to match international standards while contributing to the professional growth of practitioners.

Dr. Muhadditha Al Hashimi, CEO, Dubai Healthcare City, said: "As we are keen to contribute to excellence in research, academic and medical services in the region, we are committed to recognizing the efforts of the health care community. We are confident these awards will turn the spotlight on Dubai as a place for nurturing innovation and scientific discovery."

The two pioneering initiatives were launched at Arab Health 2008, the region's premier health event, which opened on 28 January.

Co-investigators for the first research grant are Dr. Rose-Mary N. Boustany, Chair of the Abu-Haidar Neuroscience Research Institute, American University of Beirut Medical Center, Lebanon, and Dr. Susan Cotman, Assistant Professor, Harvard Medical School, and member of the Center for Human Genetic Research at Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, USA. Their project titled "Galactosylceramide as Potential Treatment for Juvenile Neuronal Ceroid Lipofuscinosis (JNCL) – Batten Disease" will receive multiyear grants.

The second research grants include principal investigators such as Dr. Christopher A. Walsh, Professor of Neurology & Pediatrics, Harvard Medical School, and Chief, Division of Genetics, Children's Hospital, Boston, USA; Dr. Bassam Ali, Associate Professor of Molecular & Genetic Medicine, and Dr. Lihadh Al-Gazali, Professor in Clinical Genetics, Dept. of Paediatrics, both at the Faculty of Medicine, United Arab Emirates University; and Dr. Brian Meyer, Chairman, Department of Genetics, King Faisal Specialist Hospital Research Centre (KFSHRC) Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Their project titled "Identification of Genes for Human Cognition" will be funded for five years.

Recipients of the two Research Fellowship Awards are Dr. Faiqa Imtiaz Ahmad of the Arabian Diagnostics Laboratory at KFSHRC, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Dr. Hasan H. Otu of the Yeditepe University Department of Genetics and Bioengineering, Istanbul, Turkey. Dr Ahmad will investigate the genetic causes of hereditary hearing loss and deafness, while Dr Otu will investigate management and analysis of functional genomic and proteomics data. Selected for their remarkable commitment to science and outstanding track record, both will continue research within the Middle East region after completing the programs at the Harvard community.

The Dubai Harvard Foundation for Medical Research was established to help stimulate scientific inquiry and discovery in the Middle East, and lead

innovations to address the region's most pressing challenges in the healthcare sector. The Foundation's objective is to support cutting-edge collaborative research, as well as establish sustainable research centres and education programmes to spur innovations in medical practice.

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#### **About Dubai Harvard Foundation for Medical Research**

The Dubai Harvard Foundation for Medical Research is a result of the formal collaboration between Harvard Medical School (HMS) and Dubai Healthcare City (DHCC), with support from HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, and a group of private philanthropists. The Foundation supports biomedical research and academic programs that will advance new scientific knowledge and create a community of leaders in science and medicine in the Middle East and the Gulf Region, by developing a sustainable regional infrastructure and providing funding for pioneering research and new technologies.

The Foundation has a permanent endowment, which generates funds to sustain medical education, create scholarship and fellowship programs, and develop research centers in life sciences. Membership in the Foundation offers philanthropists the opportunity to drive biomedical research in a number of critical disease areas, including cancer, cardiovascular disease, and neurological disorders affecting children, among others. Founder Members are also members of the Foundation Council and take their place alongside a small number of like-minded individuals who want to develop with Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid a vision of world-class healthcare and research.

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