

## News Release

June 29, 2010

### Merck Serono To Award Grant To Innovative Research Projects In Fertility

- **Grant designed to stimulate innovation in the field of fertility**
- **Around 1 million Euros allocated to five translational research projects**

Rome, Italy, June 29, 2010 – Merck Serono, a division of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, today announces the recipients of its first Grant for Fertility Innovation. The company has awarded around 1 million Euros to five innovative research projects with the same common goal: to improve the chances for couples to conceive a baby. The Grant for Fertility Innovation program was developed by the company to support the advancement of medical science in the field of fertility.

“This initiative represents an unprecedented commitment from Merck Serono to encourage innovative thinking among the scientific community in the fertility area”, said Fereydoun Firouz, Head of the Global Business Unit Fertility and Metabolic Endocrinology at Merck Serono. “Today, we are proud to award the first grants to five breakthrough projects which have demonstrated a potential to develop into novel applications for clinicians to improve patients outcomes. We will continue to stimulate innovation in the fertility field by offering new grants for next year.”

A total of 212 entries were received from scientists from 33 countries worldwide. Projects were selected by a scientific committee composed of fertility experts. Each entry was blinded and evaluated according to five criteria: support to increase the chances to conceive a baby, innovation, scientific rationale, feasibility and practical utility.

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The awardees were announced at a ceremony held at the 26<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology (ESHRE), in the presence of Professor André Van Steirteghem, a recognized pioneer in fertility treatment, Professor Emeritus of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB; Brussels Free University), Honorary Consultant of the Centre for Reproductive Medicine of the Universitair Ziekenhuis Brussel, and Editor-in-Chief of the peer-reviewed journal *Human Reproduction*.

Grants were awarded to:

- **Dr. Nathalie Ledee**, Professor of Assisted reproduction at the University of Paris, France: *Non-invasive approaches on oocyte competence to predict pregnancy.*
- **Dr. Dominique Royere**, Professor of Reproductive Medicine and Biology, University of Tours, France: *Cumulus cells biomarkers detection by reverse phase protein microarray.*
- **Dr. Carlos Simon**, Professor of Obstetrics & Gynecology at the University of Valencia, Spain: *New Non-Invasive Diagnostic Method of Human Endometrial Receptivity.*
- **Dr. Carl Spiessens**, Assistant Professor of Medicine at the Catholic University of Leuven and Director of the Laboratory of the Leuven University Fertility Center, Belgium: *Selecting the embryo with the highest implantation potential using novel non-invasive methods.*
- **Dr. Dagan Wells**, BRC Scientific Leadership Fellow in Reproductive Genetics at the Nuffield Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, University of Oxford: *Rapid inexpensive DNA fragmentation analysis of sperm & cumulus cells.*

Funding of each project is dependent on fulfillment of predetermined, specific milestones. Further details on the five research programs and information relating to the 2011 entry submissions are available on the Grant for Fertility Innovation website: [www.grantforfertilityinnovation.com](http://www.grantforfertilityinnovation.com).

### Notes to editors

Photos of the award ceremony can be downloaded from the Grant for Fertility Innovation website: [www.grantforfertilityinnovation.com](http://www.grantforfertilityinnovation.com) from Tuesday, June 29, 2010.

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### About Merck Serono and Fertility Treatment

Merck Serono is the world leader in fertility treatments, and the only company to offer a full portfolio of fertility drugs for every stage of the reproductive cycle and recombinant versions of the three hormones needed to treat infertility: GONAL-f® (follitropin alfa), to stimulate the ovaries and produce eggs in women and spermatogenesis induction in men; Luveris® (lutropin alfa), to stimulate follicular development in women who are profoundly LH deficient; Ovitrelle® (choriogonadotropin alfa), to help follicles mature and release eggs; Pergoveris® (follitropin alfa/lutropin alfa) to stimulate follicular development in women with severe LH and FSH deficiency; Cetrotide® (cetrotorelix acetate) to prevent a premature ovulation; and Crinone® (progesterone gel), to help establish and maintain a pregnancy. Not all products are available in all markets.

### About Merck Serono

Merck Serono is the division for innovative prescription pharmaceuticals of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, a global pharmaceutical and chemical company. Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, Merck Serono discovers, develops, manufactures and markets innovative small molecules and biopharmaceuticals to help patients with unmet medical needs. In the United States and Canada, EMD Serono operates through separately incorporated affiliates.

Merck Serono has leading brands serving patients with cancer (Erbix®<sup>®</sup>, cetuximab), multiple sclerosis (Rebif®<sup>®</sup>, interferon beta-1a), infertility (Gonal-f®<sup>®</sup>, follitropin alfa), endocrine and metabolic disorders (Saizen®<sup>®</sup> and Serostim®<sup>®</sup>, somatropin), (Kuvan®<sup>®</sup>, sapropterin dihydrochloride) as well as cardiometabolic diseases (Glucophage®<sup>®</sup>, metformin), (Concor®<sup>®</sup>, bisoprolol), (Euthyrox®<sup>®</sup>, levothyroxine). Not all products are available in all markets.

With an annual R&D expenditure of more than € 1 billion, Merck Serono is committed to growing its business in specialist-focused therapeutic areas including neurodegenerative diseases, oncology, fertility and endocrinology, as well as new areas potentially arising out of research and development in autoimmune and inflammatory diseases.

### About Merck

Merck is a global pharmaceutical and chemical company with total revenues of € 7.7 billion in 2009, a history that began in 1668, and a future shaped by approximately 33,600 employees in 64 countries. Its success is characterized by innovations from entrepreneurial employees. Merck's operating activities come under the umbrella of Merck KGaA, in which the Merck family holds an approximately 70% interest and free shareholders own the remaining approximately 30%. In 1917 the U.S. subsidiary Merck & Co. was expropriated and has been an independent company ever since.

For more information, please visit [www.merckserono.com](http://www.merckserono.com) or [www.merck.de](http://www.merck.de)