



November 12, 2014

Advancing Lupus Care through Research and Advocacy: The Progress and the Promise for Lupus Patients

LRI's Scientific Conference for the Non-Scientist



Back by overwhelmingly popular demand, our second scientific conference for the non-scientist provided the latest news on where lupus research is headed and how everyone from patients to physicians can participate in LRI's "team" approach to deliver new treatments faster. Watch presentations [here](#).

Opening the session, **LRI President and CEO Margaret Dowd** noted, "LRI has always fostered bold, high-risk science. Building on our unparalleled foundation in innovation, we are now able to pursue novel clinical research and clinical trials -- work that can transform patients' lives today while driving toward prevention and a cure tomorrow."

To illustrate the breadth of what's already been achieved, Ms. Dowd introduced three LRI-funded projects exemplifying the power of innovation.

Novel Treatments for Lupus Nephritis

Joshua Thurman, MD, University of Colorado School of Medicine

Dr. Thurman explained the many challenges of treating lupus nephritis including drugs that cause serious side effects by switching off the immune system. His [recent work](#) suggests that a protein called annexin A2 found in the kidney of some patients with lupus might offer a new approach to treating lupus nephritis.

“We discovered that annexin A2 acts like a switch, turning on a part of the body’s immune system. We aim to make new drugs that block annexin A2 and test whether they prevent kidney disease in mice that develop lupus-like disease,” said Dr. Thurman.



The Microbiome and SLE

Gregg Silverman, MD, NYU School of Medicine

Dr. Silverman shared [his project](#) in the new and growing field looking at the connection between individuals’ microbiome (the bacteria in their gut) with the development and progression of lupus.

“We are using cutting-edge DNA sequencing technology to identify all the gut germs in over 100 lupus patients. This survey of the gut ‘microbiome,’ the first in lupus patients, might reveal new strains of bacteria that are risk factors for lupus. This knowledge could be used to predict who will get the disease, allowing for early treatment or prevention.”

LRxL Stat – Repurposing Existing Drugs for Lupus

Amrie Grammer, PhD, AMPEL BioSolutions

Dr. Grammer shared the status of the current [LRxL STAT project](#) – a collaborative initiative between the LRI and the Alliance for Lupus Research that elicited input from the entire lupus community on ways to improve lupus treatment.

“We are exploring whether drugs already approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for other diseases might be used for lupus. The goal is to bring new drugs and therapies to lupus patients – STAT.”



Check the [LRI website](#) and www.linkedin.com/in/lrxlstat later this month for exciting updates presented at the upcoming American College of Rheumatology annual meeting.



Advocacy to Transform Patients' Lives

Diane Gross, MPH, S.L.E. Lupus Foundation | Lupus Research Institute

The conference concluded with an interactive session on how patients, families, and friends can help improve lupus treatment by advocating for more federal budget allocations to lupus research and better access to new medications. Ms. Gross stressed that advocacy simply means taking action to persuade someone who is in a position to make a difference.

She emphasized the three advocacy priorities of the LRI: federal funding for biomedical research; access to quality healthcare and medications; and elimination of healthcare disparities for people with lupus. Ms. Gross encouraged everyone to visit the [Legislative Action Center](#) on the LRI website to read how to help advocate for these key issues to the lupus community.

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About the Lupus Research Institute

The world's leading private supporter of innovative research in lupus, the LRI champions scientific risk-taking in the hunt for solutions to this complex and dangerous autoimmune disease.

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