



YOUNG INVESTIGATOR AWARD IN SPINAL MUSCULAR ATROPHY DEADLINE: OCTOBER 1, 2003

The American Academy of Neurology Foundation and the Spinal Muscular Atrophy Foundation are pleased to announce funding for up to three Young Investigator Awards to advance clinical research in the cause, treatment, or cure of spinal muscular atrophy (SMA).

Each Young Investigator Award will consist of a three-year commitment to provide:

- \$85,000 in salary support plus fringe benefits
- Mentor support equal to 5% (not to exceed \$9,250) of salary plus fringe benefits
- Up to \$7,000 per year research allowance for direct research expense, tuition and travel reimbursement

The Young Investigator Award in Spinal Muscular Atrophy will be made to an outstanding young investigator working in a mentored environment towards a career as an independent clinical investigator in the area of spinal muscular atrophy. These research awards are funded by a grant from the Spinal Muscular Atrophy Foundation. Research proposals should seek to advance understanding and accelerate the development of a treatment or cure for Spinal Muscular Atrophy, the leading genetic killer of infants and toddlers. Spinal Muscular Atrophy is a progressive, debilitating and potentially fatal disease of the motor neurons caused by the absence of a single gene – SMN1. The incidence of SMA is one in every 6,000 live births – approximately the same as Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. Recent work suggests that disease severity is linked to the number of copies and function of a “back-up gene” SMN2. Potential treatments are tantalizingly close.

ELIGIBILITY

1. Applicants must have a well-outlined proposal for clinical research* towards a treatment or cure for Spinal Muscular Atrophy.
2. Applicants and their mentors should be able to document a path of research training and should propose a career development plan as needed to support evolution into an independent investigator. Preference will be given to investigators planning to continue work in the area of Spinal Muscular Atrophy.
3. Preference will be given to clinical investigators (MD, DO, MD/PhD, PhD) within 10 years of the completion of residency or post-doctoral training.
4. Supplementation of this grant with other awards or by the sponsor institution is permissible, however investigators currently holding K or R series grants from the NIH are not eligible to apply

MATERIALS FOR APPLICATION

Applicants must submit one complete set of the following:

1. A letter of intent to pursue a three-year program of research in the area of SMA. The letter should outline the proposed institution and mentor, motivating reasons for wanting to conduct the research, and the long-term goals of the applicant.
2. A five-page research proposal, including a brief statement of specific aims (1 page), background and significance (1 page), and research design and methodology (3 pages). A succinct literature review, budget, and abstract of up to 500 words should also be included.
3. A curriculum vitae indicating the applicant's training and research background. Include a separate bibliography section indicating any original reports, reviews, and chapters published by the applicant.
4. A letter of nomination from the Chair of the sponsoring Department stating assurance that the applicant will have 75% of his/her professional time protected for the described research and career development effort.
5. Three letters of reference supporting the applicant's potential for a clinical, academic research career, and qualifications for the fellowship.
6. Listing of the applicant's and mentor's current and pending support using NIH format (other than this award).
7. A letter from the proposed mentor detailing his/her support of, and commitment to, the applicant and the proposed research and training plan. The letter should specifically indicate the mentor's role in the development and preparation of the applicant's research plan including:
 - How the proposed research fits into the mentor's research program
 - Expertise and experience in the area of research proposed and the nature of the mentor's proposed time commitment to the supervision and training of the applicant
 - Mentor's prior experience in the supervision, training, and successful mentoring of clinician scientists

EVALUATION AND SELECTION

Applications are evaluated by the Spinal Muscular Atrophy Task Force composed of medical/scientific advisors from the SMA Foundation and the AAN Clinical Research Subcommittee. Evaluations will be based upon the following criteria:

- The originality and quality of the research plan
- The applicant's ability and promise as a clinician scientist as revealed by his/her previous training and career plan, letters of reference, and curriculum vitae
- The quality and nature of the training to be provided, and the institutional, departmental, and mentor-specific environment in which these will occur.

Evaluations will be forwarded to the AAN Foundation Research Council for final determination, of the award.

RESEARCH PROGRESS AND FINANCIAL REPORTS

An annual research progress report is due on May 1 each year of the award. Renewal of the \$85,000 award and mentor support in years two and three is contingent upon the presentation of a satisfactory annual research and career development progress report by the recipient and mentor. Additionally, the investigator should be prepared to show evidence of seeking further grant support (including NIH) by year two of this project, as well as ongoing presentation and publication efforts.

A final research and career development report are due within 60 days following the close of the grant term. Sponsor institutions must also submit a final expenditure report at this time.

DEADLINE AND ADDRESS

The AAN Foundation must receive all applications and supporting materials by October 1, 2003. Notification of recipients will take place in December 2003.

APPLICATIONS SHOULD BE SENT TO:
Young Investigator Award in Spinal Muscular Atrophy
American Academy of Neurology Foundation

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NOTICE REGARDING THE NIH LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

The NIH Extramural Loan Repayment Program (LRP) has been broadened to include investigators conducting "qualifying research supported by a nonprofit foundation...." Applicants to the Young Investigator Award in Spinal Muscular Atrophy may be eligible for this program and are encouraged to apply. For more information, visit the LRP website at www.lrp.nih.gov.

* Clinical research, as defined by the American Academy of Neurology, is "patient-oriented clinical research conducted with human subjects, or research on the causes and consequences of disease in human populations involving material of human origin for which an investigator or colleague directly interacts with human subjects in an outpatient or inpatient setting to clarify a problem in human physiology, pathophysiology or disease. This area of research includes epidemiologic or behavioral studies, clinical trials, studies of the mechanisms of human disease, the development of new technologies, and health services and outcomes research."