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Lasker Clinical Research Scholars Recruited by National Institutes of Health
Cohort for clinical research program continues to grow

The National Institutes of Health has selected three researchers as new Lasker Clinical Research Scholars as part of a joint initiative with the Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation to nurture the next generation of great clinical scientists.

This highly competitive program provides talented early-stage researchers the opportunity to carry out independent clinical and translational research for five to seven years at the NIH campus in Bethesda, Maryland. The researchers also have the possibility of additional years of financial support, at NIH or an NIH-funded research institution, upon project review.

The scholars are Hans Ackerman, M.D., D.Phil.; Andrea Apolo, M.D.; and Falk Lohoff, M.D. They join two NIH Lasker scholars hired previously.

"The Lasker Clinical Research Scholars is an innovative program that supports accomplished young clinician researchers as they work to discover new knowledge and develop therapies and cures," said Lasker Foundation President Claire Pomeroy, M.D., M.B.A. "Providing career pathways for the next generation of scientific investigators is crucial to carrying out the Lasker mission to improve health by accelerating support of medical research. We are excited to continue growing this program and look forward to the breakthroughs that will be made by these talented individuals."

Ackerman is chief of the Physiology Section in the Sickle Cell Branch at NIH's National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. He is studying how metabolic and genetic factors affect blood flow in people with sickle cell disease, with a special emphasis on stroke and kidney injury in adults. He also is working with the Sickle Cell Research and Treatment Center in Bamako, Mali, to identify the major causes of death and disability in children with sickle cell disease.

Apolo is chief of the Bladder Cancer Section at NIH's National Cancer Institute, where her research involves developing and designing clinical trials to test novel agents for the treatment of urologic cancers. Her primary research interest is in bladder cancer (urothelial carcinoma). In particular, she is working to develop new bladder cancer targeted therapies such as anti-angiogenesis compounds, Met inhibitors, and immunotherapeutic combinations.

Lohoff is chief of the Section on Clinical Genomics and Experimental Therapeutics in the Laboratory of Clinical and Translational Studies at NIH's National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. His research focuses on heritable and non-heritable genetic aspects that influence the onset, progression, and treatment of alcohol use disorders and addictions. Findings

from these studies are translated into human clinical studies using diverse approaches, including molecular biomarkers, pharmacogenetics, epigenetics and functional imaging genetics.

“Identifying talented and innovative scholars early in their careers is paramount to building a robust cadre of physician-researchers,” said NIH Director Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D. “We hope this continued effort with the Lasker Foundation leads to major scientific discoveries that impact human health.”

Lasker scholars have access to the NIH Clinical Center, the largest hospital in the world devoted to clinical research. The Lasker Foundation will provide additional developmental support to the scholars while they are working at NIH by funding travel to scientific meetings and providing the opportunity to participate in selected foundation activities, including the Lasker Award ceremonies.

The Lasker Clinical Research Scholar program honors the contributions of Mary and Albert Lasker to the NIH and to the overall biomedical community. Learn more about the program at http://www.nih.gov/science/laskerscholar/.

About the Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation: Founded in 1942, the Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation envisions a healthier world through medical research. It seeks to improve health by accelerating support for medical research through recognition of research excellence, public education, and advocacy. For much of the 20th century, the Foundation was led by Mary Lasker, who was America's most prominent citizen-activist for public investment in medical research. She is widely credited with motivating the White House and Congress to greatly expand federal funding for medical research, particularly through the NIH. For more information about the Lasker Foundation and its programs, visit http://www.laskerfoundation.org.

About the National Institutes of Health (NIH): NIH, the nation's medical research agency, includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIH is the primary federal agency conducting and supporting basic, clinical, and translational medical research, and is investigating the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit www.nih.gov.