

THE BAILLET LATOUR GRANT 2016 FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH AWARDED TO PROF. MOHAMED LAMKANFI (GHENT UNIVERSITY / VIB) FOR HIS PROJECT IN THE FIELD OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

To promote medical research in Belgium, the Baillet Latour Fund awards every year a Grant to help a young group leader to conduct a research project in a Belgian University or University Hospital. This year the Grant is awarded to Professor Mohamed Lamkanfi (Ghent University / VIB) for his research project in the field of infectious diseases. These are often aggravated by inflammatory complications. The research of Prof. Lamkanfi aims at understanding this causal relationship better, in view of minimizing the destructive inflammatory process.

■ A GRANT TO PROMOTE MEDICAL RESEARCH IN BELGIUM

Every year the Baillet Latour Fund awards the "Baillet Latour Grant for Medical Research". This Grant supports the research project of a young group leader in a Belgian University or University Hospital, on the same topic as the international "Baillet Latour Health Prize". The laureate is chosen by the jury of the Health Prize. The laureate's laboratory will receive an annual sum of € 150,000 for three years with a possible extension for two more years.

The Baillet Latour Grant 2016 for Medical Research is awarded to an investigator in the field of "Infectious Diseases". The topic for next year will be "Neurological Diseases".

■ PROFESSOR MOHAMED LAMKANFI, AWARDEE OF THE BAILLET LATOUR GRANT 2016 FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH



Professor Mohamed Lamkanfi was selected by the jury for his research project on the "Mechanisms of inflammasome-induced immune cell death and its role in host defence against bacterial pathogens"

Prof. Lamkanfi's research addresses the roles of 'NOD-like receptors' and of 'inflammasomes' in infectious, inflammatory and autoimmune diseases. NOD-like receptors are sensor molecules that allow immune cells to recognize and attack invading pathogens. A powerful mechanism in this response is the assembly of 'inflammasomes'. These protein complexes initiate the regulated death of infected cells. Prof. Lamkanfi's group elucidated several inflammasome mechanisms and described - with Prof. Geert van Loo - the role of inflammasomes in a mouse model of inflammatory arthritis. His research has led to new insights into the genetic disorder "Familial Mediterranean Fever (FMF)", which constitute the basis of an immunological test for the identification of FMF patients.

As to Dr Lamkanfi's research project, it follows the observation that regulated cell death is a mechanism that enables immune cells to "commit suicide", thereby killing the microbes that infect them. One mode of cell death, "pyroptosis", is associated with the release of cytokines that trigger inflammation and of other factors that alert immune cells of imminent danger. Another mode, "apoptosis", is a cell death that avoids a strong immune stimulation because the cell content is recycled by other cells. The objective of the project is to determine how inflammasomes link the detection of pathogens to these two modes of regulated cell death. Prof. Lamkanfi plans to use the newly acquired knowledge to convert pyroptosis, which provokes inflammation, into apoptosis, which does not, to minimize destructive inflammatory responses in infectious diseases.



Dr Lamkanfi obtained his PhD from Ghent University in 2004 followed by three years of postdoctoral training in immunology at the University of Michigan and with the biotech company Genentech in San Francisco. He is Associate Professor with the Department of Internal Medicine of Ghent University and Group leader at the Inflammation Research Center of the Flanders Institute of Biotechnology (VIB). His recent awards are a 'Starting Grant' (2011) and a 'Consolidator Grant' (2015) from the European Research Council, the Prize of the Flemish Scientific Foundation for Biomedical Sciences (2013), and the AstraZeneca Foundation Prize for Auto-immune diseases and Rheumatology (2014).

THE JURY OF THE BAILLET LATOUR GRANT 2016 FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

Prof. Françoise BARRÉ-SINOSSI (Chairperson): Nobel Laureate - Institut Pasteur, Paris, France

Prof. Fernando BAQUERO: Research Professor - Ramón y Cajal Institute for Health Research (IRYCIS), Madrid, Espagne

Prof. Jean-Laurent CASANOVA: Head of the St Giles Laboratory of Human Genetics of Infectious Diseases - The Rockefeller University, New York, USA

Prof. Ron DAGAN: Distinguished Professor of Pediatrics and Infectious Diseases - Soroka University Medical Center, Beer-Sheva, Israël

Prof. David W. DENNING: Professor of Infectious Diseases in Global Health - University Hospital of South Manchester, Manchester, UK

Prof. Niels FRIMODT-MØLLER: Department of Clinical Microbiology - Rigshospitalet, Copenhagen, Denmark

Prof. Ab OSTERHAUS: Erasmus MC - Department of Viroscience, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

■ FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Baillet Latour Fund - Alain De Waele, Secretary General

Tel: +32 (0) 16 27 61 59

GSM: + 32 (0) 473 80 84 73

E-mail: alain.dewaele@iblf.be

Interel - Ellen De Wilde

Tel: +32 (2) 213 13 09

E-mail: ellen.dewilde@interelgroup.com

Professor Mohamed Lamkanfi

Tel: + 32 (9) 331 37 30

E-mail: mohamed.lamkanfi@irc.vib-ugent.be

Websites

Baillet Latour Fund: www.fondsbailletlatour.com

F.R.S.-FNRS: www.frs-fnrs.be

FWO: www.fwo.be



Fund Fonds
Fonds Baillet Latour



Excellence on the move

The Baillet Latour Foundation was established in 1974, on the initiative of Count Alfred de Baillet Latour. Its aim? To promote, encourage and reward excellence, principally in Belgium, by focussing **its work on people.**

■ Building a better future

For over 40 years, the Foundation has sought to support initiatives that are remarkable for their influence, the excellence they inspire or their innovative approach to meeting the challenges faced by tomorrow's society.

Its support generates concrete spin-offs with specific future benefits in four areas: **health, education, culture and sport.**

■ Making a difference

The Health Prize, the Grant for Medical Research or the Environmental Prize, university and sports management chairs, the restoration of iconic elements of Belgium's movable heritage, support for high achievement in music and sport or for initiatives in societal development and citizenship education encouraging the involvement of young people in particular... The Foundation contributes on an ongoing basis to the development of **projects that make a difference.**

■ Dynamism and good governance

With its sights set firmly on the future, the Baillet Latour Foundation is keen to maintain natural discretion, while the hundreds of projects that it has supported since its inception make it a widely recognised, indispensable member of civil society. The backdrop to this commitment is a mode of operation that is absolutely rigorous and ensures good governance.

The General Secretary and President jointly manage its day-to-day work – namely the pre-selection, supervision and monitoring of projects. The Board of Directors, supported by experts of international renown, is then responsible for validating its work and **undertakings.**

Go further

Like to know more?

All the projects supported by the Baillet Latour Foundation and the remarkable work it rewards can be found on its website: **www.fondsbailletlatour.com**. Welcome!