ISHLT Awards Three Research Grants at 2021 Annual Meeting & Scientific Sessions

Grants given in partnership with Medtronic, ICCAC, and Enduring Hearts

ADDISON, Texas – 28 April, 2021 – The International Society of Heart and Lung Transplantation (ISHLT) awarded three grants to researchers in the fields of heart transplantation, MCS, and VAD coordination at the closing plenary session of its Annual Meeting on Wednesday, 28 April 2021.

ISHLT/O.H. FRAZIER AWARD IN MCS TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH
Sponsored by Medtronic

The lauded Frazier award was given in 2021 to **Vakhtang Tchantchaleishvili, MD**, of Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, PA USA. The work is entitled "Impact of Continuous-Flow Mechanical Circulatory Support on Cerebrospinal Fluid Motility," and is designed to build understanding of the impact of blood pumps on the brain and spinal fluid flow of a patient. With the funding, Dr. Tchantchaleishvili's team will build an accurate model of the cardiovascular system, brain, and spinal fluid flow to better understand conditions that arise while using a blood pump and devise new treatment solutions for patients with heart failure.

Pre- and post-MD, Dr. Tchantchaleishvili accumulated research experience in end-stage heart failure by working in the Cardiac Surgery Research Laboratories at the University of Bern, Switzerland (2004); Medical University of Innsbruck, Austria (2007), and Brigham and Women's Hospital - Harvard Medical School (2007-08). In 2016, he completed cardiothoracic surgery residency at the University of Rochester, and then selected an advanced fellowship in mechanical circulatory support (MCS) and cardiac transplantation at the Mayo Clinic. He was the 2015 recipient of the Paul Malchesky Fellowship for Young Innovators Award and the 2017 recipient of the C. Walton Lillehei / Earl Bakken Prize. In 2017, he became a faculty at Thomas Jefferson University, and established a research program focused on innovation in clinical and translational aspects of MCS and cardiac transplantation.

ISHLT and **Medtronic** have collaborated to give the Frazier award, which aims to improve patient outcomes, since 2014, making Dr. Tchantchaleishvili the eighth person to win this award.

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ISHLT/ICCAC VAD COORDINATOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT AWARD
Co-presented by ISHLT and ICCAC, Sponsored by Medtronic

The second annual ISHLT/ICCAC VAD Coordinator Career Development Award was presented to **Yu Wu, DNP, ACNP**, of the University of California San Francisco in San Francisco, CA USA. Her work is entitled "Impact of a Prehabilitation Program on LVAD implantation surgical outcomes." The single-center study will assess the impact of a prehabilitation program on the outcomes of patients undergoing LVAD implantation. The program will include education, exercise, and nutritional augmentation and will focus on optimizing patients' functional capacity prior to their LVAD implantation. The team posits that focused prehabilitation will improve clinical outcomes, quality of life, and expedite the VAD patient's return to a productive and satisfying level of ADLs.

Wu is a nurse practitioner and has been working as a VAD coordinator since 2018 after earning her DNP at the University of Florida. She medically manages LVAD patients, collaborating with physicians and a multidisciplinary team to determine proper selection and referral for advanced therapies, assist with LVAD implantation and explant in OR, and provide LVAD education to patient and caregivers. Wu also serves as a lead member for ongoing quality improvement projects that focus on improvement of patient outcomes.

Optimizing outcomes of patients who have received a mechanical circulatory support device as treatment for advanced heart failure and increasing access to this life saving therapy are shared goals of **ISHLT**, **ICCAC**, and **Medtronic**. Professional growth and development of VAD coordinators is paramount to ensuring the MCS community has the capacity to provide this advanced therapy. This is the second year for the VAD Coordinator Career Development Award, which aims to provide professional development for VAD coordinators while optimizing patient outcomes.

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ISHLT/ENDURING HEARTS TRANSPLANT LONGEVITY RESEARCH AWARD
Co-presented by ISHLT and Enduring Hearts

The 2021 ISHLT/Enduring Hearts Transplant Longevity Research Award was presented to **Christian Heim, MD, MHBA**, of the University of Erlangen in Erlangen, Germany. His work is entitled "Antiproliferative treatment options for chronic rejection after heart transplantation." The work will assess the effectiveness of pirfenidone and nintedanib, both alone and together, in the prevention of cardiac allograft vasculopathy (CAV). Promising results from this experiment mean it could be possible to rededicate the use of nintedanib and pirfenidone from IPF treatment to heart transplant recipients to prevent the development of CAV. This could improve and prolong post-transplant survival, of great importance for pediatric recipients.

Dr. Heim is a cardiac surgeon and the vice-chair of cardiac surgery at the Friedrich-Alexander-University of Erlangen-Nürnberg in Erlangen, Germany. He has been at the University of Erlangen since 2010, when he earned his MD. He earned his Master of Health Business Administration at Erlangen in 2019, studying socioeconomic methods in medicine. Dr. Heim has won several awards, including the 2019 Young Investigator Award from the German Transplantation Society (DTG), the 2018 Young Investigator Scientific Award of The Transplantation Society (TTS), and the 2017 ISHLT Transplant Registry Early Career Award.

"It was such an honor for Enduring Hearts to present the 2021 ISHLT/Enduring Hearts Transplant Longevity Research Award to Dr. Heim," said Carolyn Salvador, Chief Executive Officer of Enduring Hearts. "We support researchers such as Dr. Heim for furthering their insight and scientific understanding on the longevity of heart transplantation and improving and extending the life of pediatric patients."

This bi-annual award is fully funded by the nonprofit **Enduring Hearts** and co-presented by **ISHLT** and Enduring Hearts, and offers researchers significant financial resources for work that furthers the scientific understanding of the determinants of transplanted heart longevity, thereby improving the quality and duration of life.

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For more information about ISHLT's Research Grants, visit **ishlt.org/research-data/grants-awards/research-grants**.

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About ISHLT

The International Society for Heart and Lung Transplantation is a not-for-profit, multidisciplinary professional organization dedicated to improving the care of patients with advanced heart or lung disease through transplantation, mechanical support and innovative therapies. With more than 3,800 members in more than 45 countries, ISHLT is the world's largest organization dedicated to the research, education and advocacy of end-stage heart and lung disease. ISHLT members represent more than 15 different professional disciplines. For more information, visit www.ishlt.org.

About ICCAC

The International Consortium of Circulatory Assist Clinicians (ICCAC) is a professional mentoring organization of mechanical circulatory assist device clinicians whose mission is to share information, educate and support individuals in this field to achieve optimal outcomes for patients requiring mechanical circulatory support, and to support efforts in the area of device clinical research and development. iccac.global

About Medtronic

Medtronic plc (www.medtronic.com), headquartered in Dublin, Ireland, is among the world's largest medical technology, services, and solutions companies – alleviating pain, restoring health, and extending life for millions of people around the world. Medtronic employs more than 90,000 people worldwide, serving physicians, hospitals, and patients in more than 150 countries. The company is focused on collaborating with stakeholders around the world to take healthcare Further, Together.

About Enduring Hearts

Founded in 2013, Enduring Hearts is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to funding innovative research aimed at improving the lives of children living with transplanted hearts. Enduring Hearts has funded approximately $6.5 million in research grants aimed at helping children with end-stage heart failure not only live longer lives, but also improve the quality of life for transplant recipients. We work with our team of leading doctors and scientists in the field of transplantation, pediatric cardiology, and immunology to drive leading-edge research that will make a transplant last a lifetime. Our leadership and Board of Directors follow the research process closely, utilizing our business acumen to ensure that the funding is used efficiently and that our investments make an impact. www.enduringhearts.org.