

Putting the spotlight on membranous nephropathy

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The Halpin Foundation and the American Society of Nephrology (ASN) proudly highlight the research advances in membranous nephropathy made possible by The Halpin Foundation-ASN Research Grant, created to help young faculty develop independent research careers. This award provides recipients transition funding toward successful application for an NIH RO1 grant.

Elena Torban, PhD (McGill University Faculty of Medicine), the 2008 recipient of The Halpin Foundation-ASN Research Grant, recently explained, "The generous financial two-year support provided by The Halpin Foundation has enabled us to conduct a successful experimental program demonstrating for the first time that podocyte architecture is indeed regulated by the PCP pathway. We also showed that the podocyte-specific protein, nephrin, is linked to proteins of the PCP network. This finding establishes a mechanism whereby the PCP pathway regulates nephrin-dependent organization of foot processes."

The 2009 recipient of The Halpin Foundation Laurence H. Beck, Jr., MD, PhD wrote of the grant, "The funding provided by the Halpin Foundation has been instrumental in allowing my research to take root and grow. The research award has permitted me to spend the majority of these two years in the laboratory, performing experiments and helping to train young scientists and fellows conduct similar lines of inquiry. The fruits of this research should soon allow me to successfully apply for individual federal funding. Their ongoing interactions with leaders in this field on a national and international level have been enormously

helpful for me in terms of forming productive collaborations to move this research forward. I will always be grateful for this support at such a critical time in the career of a young physician-scientist."

Dr. Beck and several colleagues will also participate in a Clinical Nephrology Conference (CNC) during Renal Week entitled, "Membranous Nephropathy" on Friday, November 19 from 10:30 am – 12:30 pm in Korbel 2A/3A of the Colorado Convention Center in Denver, CO. The session, "The Human Membranous Antibody: Mechanism and Monitoring" is a way to highlight research advances and stimulate investigations regarding membranous nephropathy.

The Halpin Foundation has dedicated itself to the study of membranous nephropathy since 1989, after the Halpins' 14-year-old son was diagnosed with this rare disorder. To advance research of the disorder and its symptoms, including loss of protein in the urine and a progressive decline in renal function, The Halpin Foundation partnered with the American Society of Nephrology (ASN) to promote research relevant to membranous nephropathy in 2004.

The foundation is committed to advancing the medical community's understanding of membranous nephropathy, including whether there is a hereditary predisposition to the disease. In addition, The Halpin Foundation works to raise awareness of membranous nephropathy in the scientific and lay communities.

"We are grateful to The Halpin Foundation for helping us fund new investigators interested in studying this disease to answer the many unanswered questions surrounding membranous [nephropathy](#) and nephrotic syndrome, said ASN's President, Sharon Anderson, MD, FASN.

Joan Halpin, President of the Halpin Foundation, is hopeful this program

will "attract a diverse audience that will be encouraged to devote time and intellect to the consideration of the pathogenesis and therapy for this disorder."

Provided by American Society of Nephrology

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