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Scientists to Be Recognized as They Present Research on Zika, Cocaine in Pregnancy

Teratology Society Set to Honor Contributions of More Than a Dozen Birth Defects Researchers

RESTON, VIRGINIA— As Spring reignites vigilance against Zika virus-carrying mosquitoes, scientists leading the way in unveiling cutting-edge birth defects research related to Zika virus during pregnancy, as well as other prenatal exposures like cocaine, are being recognized by the world's premier society for this important science.

[The Teratology Society](#) is an international and multidisciplinary group of scientists including researchers, clinicians, epidemiologists, and public health professionals from academia, government and industry who study birth defects, reproduction, and disorders of developmental origin. Through its 2017 Teratology Society Awards and Special Lectures, more than a dozen scientists will be recognized for advancing the science of birth defects research.

Among the honorees will be José Cordero, MD, MPH, a Patel Distinguished Professor of Public Health at the University of Georgia College of Public Health. He's a former Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Assistant Surgeon General of the Public Health Service who currently conducts Zika virus research in Puerto Rico. "Zika emergence is a wake-up call to bring together the best of team science to understand the biology of Zika infections, its control and prevention," explained Dr. Cordero. He'll present the Josef Warkany Lecture, "Preventing Congenital Zika Syndrome: Lessons Learned from Rubella Elimination," at the [Teratology Society's Annual Meeting June 24 – 28, 2017 in Denver, Colorado](#). "Joining the Teratology Society was transformational. It became my main source of research ideas and the best venue to present research findings," he added.

Other scientific accomplishments being honored this year include research in prenatal cocaine exposure, as well new data illustrating the continued worldwide prevalence of neural tube defects, malformations that could be prevented through proper folic acid supplementation during pregnancy.

The 2017 Teratology Society award recipients and special lecturers include:

Robert L. Brent Lecture: Teratogen Update

Jan M. Friedman, MD, PhD, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC

Scheduled presentation: "In Bed with the Devil: Recognizing Human Teratogenic Exposures."

Josef Warkany Lecture

José F. Cordero, MD, MPH, University of Georgia, Atlanta, GA

Scheduled presentation: "Eliminating Congenital Zika Syndrome: Lessons Learned from Rubella Elimination."

F. Clarke Fraser New Investigator Award

Evi Struble, PhD, US Food and Drug Administration, Washington D.C.

Scheduled presentation: "Antibody Therapeutics: Structure, Function, and Placental Transfer."

Patricia Rodier Mid-Career Award for Research and Mentoring

Sonia Minnes, PhD, MA, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH

Scheduled presentation: "Project Newborn: What We Have Learned from 20 Years of Research on Prenatal Cocaine Exposure?"

James G. Wilson Publication Award for the best paper published in the journal Birth Defects Research

Vijaya Kancherla, MD, PhD, Department of Epidemiology, Rollins School of Public Health of Emory University, Atlanta, GA

Scheduled presentation: "A 2015 global update on folic acid-preventable spina bifida and anencephaly."

Agnish Fellowship

Elaine Z. Francis, Sandcastle Toxicology Associates, Ventnor City, NJ

Scheduled presentation "Why and How We Must Be Lifelong Educators-Even if It's Not in Our Job Titles."

Edward W. Carney Distinguished Service Award

John M. DeSesso, PhD, Exponent, Alexandria, VA

Edward W. Carney Trainee Award

Marie McKenzie, MS, University of Georgia, Athens GA

Birth Defects Research Distinguished Scholar Awards

Lorenzo D. Botto, MD, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT

Robert E. Chapin, PhD, New London, CT

Student and Postdoctoral Fellow Travel Awards

Alaeddin Abukabda, West Virginia University

Bhavesh Ahir, The University of Illinois at Chicago

Shaukat Ali, The University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir

Jesse Argueta, California State University, San Bernardino

Malia Ashley, University of New Mexico

Karen Boschen, University of North Carolina

Desire Buckley, University of Texas at Austin

Kai Craenen, SCK-CEN and KUL

Andreas Giannakou, Division of Intramural Population Health Research, NICHD

Brian Johnson, University of Wisconsin, Madison

Allyson Kennedy, Virginia Commonwealth University

Laetitia Laurent, INRS

Valerie McDonald, Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine

Marie McKenzie, University of Georgia

Haley Meade, Virginia Tech

Hoang Nguyen, Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine

Nelson Pace, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Krystal Rychlik, Texas A&M
Katerine Sali, Office of Research and Development, US Environmental Protection Agency
Shikhar Shrestha, University of New Mexico
Nicole Sparks, University of California, Riverside
Teresa Ubina, California State University, San Bernardino
Yislain Villalona, Northern Kentucky University
Sara Vliet, University of California, Riverside
Lauren Walker, University of California, Riverside
Penghua Yeng, University of Maryland School of Medicine
Jianxiang Zhong, University of Maryland School of Medicine
Todd Zurlinden, US Environmental Protection Agency

For a full list of Teratology Society awards and recipients, please visit:

<http://www.teratology.org/meetings/2017/awards.asp>

About the Teratology Society

The Teratology Society is made up of nearly 700 members worldwide specializing in a variety of disciplines, including developmental biology and toxicology, reproduction and endocrinology, epidemiology, cell and molecular biology, nutritional biochemistry, and genetics as well as the clinical disciplines of prenatal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics, neonatology, medical genetics, and teratogen risk counseling. Scientists interested in membership in the Teratology Society are encouraged to visit www.teratology.org.

More information on the annual meeting program may be found on [the 57th Annual Meeting website](#).

The society's official journal, *Birth Defects Research*, is published by [John Wiley & Sons](#) in partnership with the Teratology Society.

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Media Contact: Nicole Chavez, 619-368-3259, nchavez@teratology.org.