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Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine Named Top Ten Clinical Research Achievement Awardee by Clinical Research Forum

Washington, D.C. - January 30, 2020 - The Clinical Research (CR) Forum is proud to announce the important and ground-breaking clinical research studies that will be recognized at the 2020 Top Ten Clinical Research Achievement Awards at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., on April 14, 2020.

Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine is honored to announce that **“Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation for Frequently Relapsing Multiple Sclerosis,”** led by Dr. Richard Burt, was recognized as a Top Ten Clinical Research Achievement awardee.

Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation for Frequently Relapsing Multiple Sclerosis, nominated by Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, and represented by Dr. Richard Burt, Chief of Immunotherapy and Autoimmune Diseases in the Department of Medicine. The goal of autologous hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (HSCT) is to reboot a faulty immune system. Hematopoietic stem cells are taken from the patient’s blood, then the immune system is wiped clean with immune specific drugs. Next, stem cells are reintroduced to the body, where they facilitate an immune system recovery. During this process, in which there are no disease-causing immune cells or inflammation, the new immune cells reset to self-tolerance and no longer attack the body. Dr. Burt pioneered the development of HSCT, and was the first to treat multiple sclerosis patients with this treatment. The randomized trial demonstrated that that HSCT reverses neurologic disability, patients continue to improve for over 2 years after transplantation, and most patients show no further progressive disability or evidence of new disease activity over 5 years. HSCT is markedly superior to the current, ongoing drug therapies in preventing relapses, slowing disease progression, decreasing the burden of disease in the brain, and improving a patient’s quality of life. HSCT also leads to significant cost savings for both private insurance companies and public health: it carries a one-time cost of roughly \$98,000, while MS drugs cost roughly \$80,000 per year and are generally given indefinitely. More important, in reversing MS and stopping new disease activity, HSCT is a win for the patient because it accomplishes what no drug has done before.

Following a nationwide call for nominations, the Clinical Research Forum Board of Directors selected winners based on the degree of innovation and novelty involved in the advancement of science; contribution to the understanding of human disease and/or physiology; and potential impact upon the diagnosis, prevention and/or treatment of disease. All nominated studies were published in peer-reviewed journals during 2019.

The award-winning studies exemplify major advances resulting from the nation’s investment in research to benefit the health and welfare of its citizens, and reflect the influential work being conducted by investigators at research institutions and hospitals across the United States, as well as at partner institutions from around the world.

“We were gratified to see among all of the nominations that the level of scientific rigor, quality, and innovation was truly outstanding,” said Harry P. Selker, MD, MSPH, Chair of the CR Forum Board of Directors. “It was a very difficult decision-making process, but as a result, we can say with confidence that these ten studies are truly remarkable.”

On April 14 in Washington, D.C., researchers from all ten research studies will be recognized and celebrated at a gala dinner and reception at the National Press Club. At the ceremony, the Clinical Research Forum will announce the top three studies that will receive additional recognition:

- ***The Herbert Pardes Clinical Research Excellence Award***, named in honor of CR Forum board member Herbert Pardes for his profound impact on clinical research and academic medicine; this award, which comes with a \$7,500 cash prize, is for the research study that best shows a high degree of innovation and creativity, advances science, and has an impact upon human disease.
- ***The Distinguished Clinical Research Achievement Awards***, presented to the top two studies that show creativity, innovation, or a novel approach that demonstrates an immediate impact on the health and well-being of patients. Each study will receive a \$5,000 cash prize.

Awardees will have the opportunity to meet with policymakers the day after the ceremony to discuss their findings and the critical role of federal funding for clinical research.

About the Top Ten Clinical Research Achievement Awards

Recognizing the need to celebrate our nation's clinical research accomplishments that involve both innovation and impact on human disease, the Clinical Research Forum conducts an annual competition to determine the ten outstanding research accomplishments in the United States. These major research advances represent a portion of the annual return on the nation's investment in the health and future welfare of its citizens.

About the Clinical Research Forum and Clinical Research Foundation

The mission of the Clinical Research Forum is to provide leadership to the national and clinical translational research enterprise and promote understanding and support for clinical research and its impact on health and healthcare. For more information, visit www.clinicalresearchforum.org.

The Clinical Research Foundation is the charitable arm of the Clinical Research Forum. As a 501(c)(3), gifts to the Foundation support the Top Ten Clinical Research Achievement Awards and are tax deductible.

5 November 2019

Clinical Research Forum
2025 M Street NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Awards Selection Committee:

I am delighted to nominate Richard Burt, MD, for a 2020 Top Ten Clinical Research Achievement Award, for his 2019 *Journal of the American Medical Association* paper, “Effect of Nonmyeloablative Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation vs Continued Disease-Modifying Therapy on Disease Progression With Relapsing-Remitting Multiple Sclerosis: A Randomized Trial.” Chief of Immunotherapy and Autoimmune Diseases at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, Burt pioneered hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (HSCT) for multiple sclerosis (MS) in addition to other autoimmune disorders, most recently completing the first randomized HSCT trial for the disease.

In his 2019 *JAMA* paper, Burt reports on that trial. He showed that HSCT, which temporarily shuts down patients’ immune systems and reboots them by reintroducing previously taken stem cells, enables the immune system to default back to tolerance, reverse neurologic instability, and, over a period of 5 years, stop the disease’s attack in most patients. This treatment—which occurs only once—is much more cost effective than current MS drug regimens, which are given indefinitely and whose effectiveness can eventually fade. More important, Burt demonstrated that HSCT is markedly superior to the current, ongoing drug therapies in preventing relapses, slowing disease progression, decreasing the burden of disease in the brain, and improving a patient’s quality of life. For the first time, long-term, treatment free remissions of the disease are possible.

Burt has already improved the lives of patients suffering from MS. I am confident that his HSCT treatment strategy will enable researchers to further understand MS and other autoimmune disorders, and to develop more refined and targeted treatments. I urge the awards committee to give his nomination serious consideration. I cannot imagine a finer candidate.

Sincerely,



Eric G. Neilson, M.D.
EGN/ssa

March 23, 2020

Dear Dr. Burt,

The Clinical Research Forum is pleased to inform you that your study, *Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation for Frequently Relapsing Multiple Sclerosis*, has been chosen to receive a Distinguished Clinical Research Award! This award is presented to the top two studies that show creativity, innovation, or a novel approach that demonstrates an immediate impact on the health and well-being of patients. Each award comes with a cash prize of \$5,000.

Since we are unable to hold the Top 10 event at the National Press Club as planned, we hope to be able to publicly recognize you at our virtual Top 10 awards announcement, currently planned for April 15th. Staff has sent out a short survey to you and all Top 10 awardees regarding scheduling; please [click here](#) to provide your feedback if you haven't done so already.

At this point, please consider this announcement to be embargoed until April 15th. Our staff will provide you and your public relations department with the announcement press release, as well as information that can be customized for your own use. In addition, you will receive the physical award statuette and information on how to claim your prize.

On behalf of the Clinical Research Forum, we would like to thank you again for your outstanding achievement in clinical research. This year, we were gratified to see the remarkable level of scientific rigor, quality, and innovation. It was a difficult decision-making process, but as a result, the top ten studies we have chosen are truly remarkable.

We congratulate you on this honor and look forward to recognizing your work publicly very soon.

Sincerely,



Harry P. Selker, MD, MSPH
Chair, Clinical Research Forum



Herbert Pardes, MD
Vice Chair, Clinical Research Forum



E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA
Chair, Top 10 Clinical Research
Achievement Awards