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Myelin Repair Foundation Receives \$1.2 Million Grant from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to Further Accelerated Scientific Research Model

September 21, 2005 – Saratoga, CA -- The Myelin Repair Foundation (MRF) announced today that it has been awarded a three-year, \$1.2 million grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to further develop an innovative research model that may be able to speed the process of scientific discovery to medical treatment. MRF has created a unique partnership between academic researchers, scientists and business executives to define an integrated research plan, provide ongoing funding, and coordinate research efforts for maximum productivity.

MRF's Accelerated Research Collaboration (ARC) model utilizes on a micro-scale the same focused scientific collaboration and best business practices that have been the cornerstone of some of the most successful large-scale research projects in the last 60 years, including most recently, the human genome project.

"Billions of dollars spent every year on basic medical research translate into relatively few effective new therapies, and they frequently require decades to move from discovery to clinical trials," said MRF Founder and President Scott Johnson. According to Johnson, by removing the competitive nature of basic scientific research and substituting collaborative strategic planning with measurable results the Foundation will be able to bring practical, safe and effective new treatment solutions to the market in a faster, more cost-effective way.

Focused exclusively on identifying myelin repair drug targets by the year 2009, MRF provides the business infrastructure for a team of five scientists, working together virtually, from different university laboratories in the U.S. and Canada. By working on a common research plan, sharing their findings in real time, and piggybacking experiments that might otherwise have taken years to accomplish, the scientists have been able to considerably accelerate their research. In the first year of collaboration, the team has produced important results in the scientific community's understanding of mechanisms in the brain that control the process of remyelination.

"There are many foundations funding research on different diseases, but fewer that are investing in the infrastructure to manage that research process more effectively," said Nancy Barrand, RWJF senior program officer. "We funded MRF because we think they are pioneering a new research style that may have relevance to other areas that are at a stage where this type of push can produce results. This could mean faster development of treatments for millions of people suffering from disease." Funding was provided through RWJF's Pioneer Portfolio, which seeks to identify innovations that can lead to fundamental breakthroughs in health and health care.

“While MRF is specifically focused on speeding myelin repair discoveries that will lead to treatments for multiple sclerosis, we are pleased that our ARC model is being recognized by funding organizations like RWJF as having implications for research more broadly,” said MRF Chief Operating Officer Rusty Bromley. “We will certainly work to make our process more visible.”

About the Myelin Repair Foundation

The Myelin Repair Foundation (MRF) - <http://www.myelinrepair.org> - is a Northern California-based, non-profit research foundation created to provide a collaborative environment in which leading research scientists at multiple universities, and experienced business executives, can work together to execute a five-year research plan – with milestones, parallel experiments, collaboration, and, most important, a constant focus on developing effective treatments for multiple sclerosis.

About Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and Myelin Repair

MS is a degenerative disease of the central nervous system that affects more than 2.5 million people worldwide. The destruction of myelin, the protective coating surrounding the nerve fibers of the brain and spinal cord, and the body’s inability to repair it, results in various types of disabilities including motor, sensory, cognitive and vision. By combining their research efforts, MRF scientists expect to develop viable treatment targets that restore the body’s natural ability to repair myelin, reversing the effects of MS.

About the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

The **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation** – <http://www.rwjf.org> - focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation’s largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change. For more than 30 years the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime.

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