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News Release

Conrad N. Hilton Foundation Grants Myelin Repair Foundation Lead Gift To Develop Tests for Myelin Repair in Human Tissue

SARATOGA, Calif. – September 20, 2011 – The Myelin Repair Foundation (MRF) today announced the receipt of a three-year, \$750,000 grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation to fund myelin repair studies with human brain cells for the development of new treatments for multiple sclerosis.

“The medical field has made significant advances in controlling the immune response that leads to the inflammatory destruction of the myelin in the brain and spinal cord in MS, but there are no therapies that stimulate healing and regeneration of the lost myelin,” says Dr. Tassie Collins, MRF Director of Translational Medicine. “And, while our own myelin repair research, and the research of others, has advanced tremendously in the last decade, so much of what we know about the biology of myelin is from animal models and animal cell culture studies. The lack of tests to evaluate the myelination of axons by oligodendrocytes in human cell cultures is a significant impediment to developing drugs that stimulate regeneration of myelin in MS. With this generous lead gift from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, we are able to launch work that will advance the entire field of myelin repair in MS.”

Funds from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation grant will be used to support sponsored research being conducted by Dr. Paul Tesar at Case Western Reserve University. Dr. Tesar’s work is focused on the development of protocols to produce human oligodendrocyte precursor cells (OPCs). The MRF will use these immature human OPCs to develop assays that measure their maturation into myelinating oligodendrocytes. These assays will be validated to support drug discovery campaigns aimed at developing novel therapeutics for MS.

Dr. Tesar's work is part of the MRF's overall strategy to build a comprehensive, non-competitive translational medicine platform for evaluating all myelin repair targets identified in academic and industry laboratories.

About the Myelin Repair Foundation

The Myelin Repair Foundation (MRF) (<http://www.myelinrepair.org>) is a Northern California-based, non-profit research organization focused on accelerating the discovery and development of myelin repair therapeutics for multiple sclerosis. Its Accelerated Research Collaboration™ (ARC™) model is designed to optimize the entire process of medical research, drug discovery and drug development leading to new patient treatments for MS.