

LEO FOUNDATION AWARD 2021 REGION AMERICAS

A BOOST TO YOUNG SKIN RESEARCH TALENTS



LEO FOUNDATION



AWARD WINNER DISCOVERS NEW CLUES IN SKIN CANCER

This year's winner of the LEO Foundation Award in Region Americas, Assistant Professor Hunter Shain at the University of California, has a true passion for skin research, he is a dedicated member of the dermatology research community, and his productivity is extraordinarily impressive.

Hunter Shain, Assistant Professor at the University of California in San Francisco, USA, receives the LEO Foundation Award worth USD 100,000.

The award winner is selected in open competition, and Hunter Shain receives the award for **his excellent and high-impact research in the field of dermatology** and for his outstanding vision for research which outlines clear questions and approaches.

The biology of skin cancer

With an overarching research goal to better understand the biology of skin cancer, Hunter Shain's research provides an unprecedented view into the origin and evolution of melanoma.

Lately his research has identified key molecular warning signs that could be used by clinicians to predict who is most likely to develop skin cancer.

A quick glance at Hunter Shain's work shows that he – in spite of his young age – has already established himself as a leader in the skin research community. His publication list and merits show an exceptional record of highly cited papers in top journals.



The external experts – **the Global Review Panel** – who evaluate all applications for the LEO Foundation Award, further highlights Hunter Shain’s use of advanced omics-techniques and new focus on single-cell sequencing, which the experts point out as timely and likely to lead to a productive career.

“I am honored and proud to receive this award. There are so many strong and talented researchers from Region Americas, so to be selected from that pile – that is fantastic, and it is a huge honor and recognition of me and my team’s work. I also want to thank the patients who have kindly donated tissues to support my research – their optimism has truly been inspiring,” Hunter Shain said.

Discovering the risk factors linked to skin cancer

There are many risk factors linked to skin cancer, but most of these factors remain difficult to quantify, making it challenging to accurately estimate skin cancer risk. Nonetheless, Hunter Shain and his team have developed a new method to directly measure the mutational damage in individual cells. More to the point, skin damage from the sun, which is often not obvious to the eye, can be correlated with melanoma risk long before cancer has a chance to bloom.

With a single-cell genotyping technique, Hunter Shain is able to measure the mutation burden of individual skin cells, thus offering an important glimpse into the genomic landscapes of individual cells.

Hunter Shain

2017 – present

Assistant Professor, University of California San Francisco, San Francisco, CA, USA

2012 – 2017

Postdoctoral Fellow, Laboratory of Dr Boris Bastian, University of California San Francisco, San Francisco, CA, USA

2006 – 2012

Graduate Student, Laboratory of Dr Jonathan Pollack, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, USA

Please visit

www.shainlab.ucsf.edu

He hypothesizes that the number of mutations in human skin cells directly correlates with the risk of developing skin cancer, and if correct, it would be a pivotal biomarker to help personalize screening recommendations and to identify those patients in need of lifestyle changes.

“Thank you for your exceptional contributions to skin research and the understanding, origin and evolution of melanoma.



Your findings have the potential to pave the way for important impact on research and clinical care, and we are confident that your productive research output will continue. We are very proud to celebrate Hunter Shain as the recipient of the LEO Foundation Award 2021 in Region Americas,” said Ida Brams, Chief Grant Officer at the LEO Foundation.

An individual prize for young skin research talents

The LEO Foundation Award is worth USD 100,000 and is given three times annually – one in each of the three regions: Americas, EMEA and Asia-Pacific.

The award is an individual prize awarded in open competition. It was born out of the aim of advancing the understanding and treatment of skin diseases and strengthening the pipeline of excellent dermatology researchers. It recognizes promising young talents and hopefully provides a boost to their future careers.

Since the first LEO Foundation Award in 2008, around 30 skin researchers have received the award.

The LEO Foundation is one of Denmark’s largest commercial foundations and an engaged owner of the pharmaceutical company LEO Pharma. The Foundation’s main objective is to ensure the company’s long-term development and success.

Besides the ownership, the LEO Foundation provides **philanthropic grants with the aim to support the best international research in skin diseases** and make Denmark a global beacon for skin research.

www.leo-foundation.org

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Hunter Shain, winner of the LEO Foundation Award 2021 - Region Americas

