

For immediate release
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Outstanding young researchers recognized at 5th IAS Conference

Prizes and awards to be presented to pioneering investigators conducting research in South Africa, Brazil, United States, Zambia and Kenya

16 July 2009 (Cape Town, South Africa) - The International AIDS Society (IAS) and its partners today announced the names of six outstanding young researchers who are winners of three prestigious scientific awards. The prizes recognize young scientists involved in innovative HIV/AIDS research and will be presented during the plenary sessions at the 5th IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention.

Among the topics of their research are the *High Incidence of Multidrug Resistant and Extensively Drug Resistant Tuberculosis among South African Health Care Workers; Diarrhea Morbidity and Mortality Increases with Weaning Prior to 6 Months among Uninfected Infants Born to HIV-infected Mothers in Zambia; and Who Starts ART in Durban, South Africa?...Not Everyone Who Should.*

The IAS's newest award - the IAS TB/HIV Research Prize for the best abstract on TB/HIV - will be given this year. The purpose of this new prize on TB/HIV research is to generate interest and stimulate research on basic, clinical and operations research in TB/HIV prevention, care, and treatment.

"It is hoped that this prize will act as an incentive for young and established researchers to investigate pertinent research questions that affect TB/HIV co-infection and operational effectiveness of implementing core TB/HIV collaborative services," said Julio Montaner, IAS President.

Notably, some awards are presented and funded jointly with IAS partner organisations and are explained below.

See attached chart for complete information on award recipients and winning abstracts. Award winners will be available for interview after their award presentations and at mutually convenient times.

IAS/ANRS Young Investigator Award

*Award Presentation: Monday, 20 July, 8:35 (before the plenary) in Session Room 1
Presenters: Dr. Julio Montaner (IAS) and Prof. Jean-François Delfraissy (ANRS)*

The US\$2,000 IAS/ANRS Young Investigator Award is jointly funded by the IAS and the *Agence Nationale de Recherches sur le SIDA* (ANRS). To be eligible, the presenting author of an abstract accepted for presentation must be under 35 years of

age. Top-scoring eligible abstracts were sent to a panel of senior scientists representing both the ANRS and the IAS, who scored and selected the winners that demonstrated innovation, originality, rationale and quality in the field of HIV/AIDS research.

One prize was awarded in each of the four conference tracks:

- Track A: Basic Sciences - **Renato Aguiar, Brazil**, for his abstract, *HIV encapsidates viral genomic RNA and APOBEC3G in mRNA processing bodies.*
- Track B: Clinical Sciences - **Max O'Donnell, USA**, for his abstract, *High incidence of multidrug resistant and extensively drug resistant tuberculosis among South African health care workers.*
- Track C: Biomedical Prevention - **Ashraf Fawzy, USA**, for his abstract, *Diarrhea morbidity and mortality increases with weaning prior to 6 months among uninfected infants born to HIV-infected mothers in Zambia.*
- Track D: Operations Research - **Ingrid Bassett, USA**, for her abstract, *Who starts ART in Durban, South Africa?...not everyone who should.*

IAS TB/HIV Research Prize

*Award Presentation: Tuesday, 21 July, 8:35 (before the plenary) in Session Room 1
Presenter: Julio Montaner and Reuben Granich*

The IAS TB/HIV Research Prize is an incentive for young and established researchers to investigate pertinent research questions that affect TB/HIV co-infection and operational effectiveness of core TB/HIV collaborative services. The winning abstract was selected through a rigorous process of blind submission and peer-review, and the top scoring TB/HIV abstracts were further reviewed by a steering committee of TB and HIV experts.

The award will be made to **Dr. Clare van Halsema, United Kingdom**, for her abstract, *Good tuberculosis treatment outcomes and no evidence of increased drug resistance in individuals previously exposed to isoniazid preventive therapy in a population with high HIV prevalence.*

Young Investigator Prize: Women, Girls and HIV

*Award Presentation: Wednesday, 22 July, 8:35 (before the plenary) in Session Room 1
Presenters: Dr. Julio Montaner and Dr. Catherine Hankins, UNAIDS*

This prize was launched at AIDS 2006, and is awarded to a female investigator from a low-income or middle-income country whose abstract demonstrates excellence in research and/or practice that addresses women, girls and gender issues related to HIV/AIDS. The US\$2,000 prize is jointly funded by the IAS, the IAS Industry Liaison Forum, and UNAIDS, and supported by the International Center for Research on Women and the International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS.

The prize recipient was selected by a review committee from eligible abstracts submitted to and accepted for presentation at IAS 2009.

This year's recipient is **Dr. Linnet N. Masese, Kenya**, for her abstract, *A prospective cohort study of the effect of antiretroviral therapy on sexual risk behaviour in a high-risk cohort of Kenyan women.*

About the International AIDS Society

The IAS is the world's leading independent association of HIV professionals, with over 14,000 members in 188 countries working at all levels of the global response to HIV/AIDS. IAS members represent scientists, clinicians, public health, policy experts and community practitioners on the frontlines of the epidemic. The IAS is the lead organizer of the International AIDS Conference and the IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention.

SUMMARY OF AWARD WINNERS

| PRIZE | NAME, COUNTRY, BIOGRAPHY | BRIEF ABSTRACT |
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| <p>IAS/ANRS Young Investigator Award</p> <p>Track A: Basic Sciences</p> | <p>Renato Aguiar Brazil</p> <p>Renato Santana de Aguiar is a Biological Science graduate from the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) in Brazil. He obtained his Master of Science degree in Biochemical and Immunology and a PhD in Genetics at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, where he started research on HIV RNA targeting. His post Doctoral work was done under the guidance of Dr. Matija Peterlin at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) – He focused on cellular factors related to HIV replication. Currently an Associate Professor at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, he is researching cellular factors that are important for HIV replication and can be targeted to develop new antiretroviral therapy. In particular, his focus is to create resistant forms of APOBEC3 proteins and HIV virus assembly. He has worked as scientific consultant in HIV/AIDS program at Lusophone African countries (Angola and Mozambique).</p> | <p>HIV encapsidates viral genomic RNA and APOBEC3G in mRNA processing bodies</p> |

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| <p>IAS/ANRS Young Investigator Award</p> <p>Track B: Clinical Sciences</p> | <p>Max O'Donnell USA</p> <p>Max O'Donnell MD, MPH is a post-doctoral fellow in Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine at Boston University Medical Center, Boston, USA. A medical graduate from Tufts University, he served his residency in internal medicine at Columbia University. His research focus is on clinical treatment outcomes and the epidemiology of tuberculosis (TB) and HIV co-infection and drug-resistant TB. His collaborators include researchers at the Centre for AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA), the University of Cape Town, and the University of Calgary. Ongoing projects focus on collection of prospective treatment outcomes of extensively drug resistant TB (XDR-TB) and research on occupational risk for drug-resistant TB among South African health care workers.</p> | <p>High incidence of multidrug resistant and extensively drug resistant tuberculosis among South African health care workers</p> |
| <p>IAS/ANRS Young Investigator Award</p> <p>Track C: Biomedical Prevention</p> | <p>Ashraf Fawzy USA</p> <p>Ashraf Fawzy earned a Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Engineering from Columbia University's Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science in 2007 and a Master of Public Health in Epidemiology from Columbia's Mailman School of Public Health in 2009. While at the Mailman school, he joined the Zambia Exclusive Breastfeeding Study Group to investigate the effect of early weaning on various clinical outcomes in HIV-exposed uninfected infants. He is currently a database engineer and data analyst in the Monitoring, Evaluation and Research division of the International Center for AIDS Care and Treatment Programs. In the fall of 2009 he will be starting his medical training at Stony Brook University School of Medicine.</p> | <p>Diarrhea morbidity and mortality increases with weaning prior to 6 months among uninfected infants born to HIV-infected mothers in Zambia</p> |

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| <p>IAS/ANRS Young Investigator Award</p> <p>Track D: Operations Research</p> | <p>Ingrid Bassett USA</p> <p>Ingrid V. Bassett, MD, MPH is an Instructor in Medicine at Harvard Medical School and an Assistant in Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital, where she works in the Division of Infectious Disease. Her research interests include HIV testing and linkage to care in Durban, South Africa. She is examining predictors of failure to link to care following a new HIV diagnosis to design interventions to improve the high rates of mortality and loss to follow-up observed in South Africa. Dr. Bassett is also evaluating optimal strategies for tuberculosis screening at the time of initiation of HIV care in Durban.</p> | <p>Who starts ART in Durban, South Africa?...not everyone who should</p> |
| <p>IAS TB/HIV Research Prize</p> | <p>Dr. Clare van Halsema United Kingdom</p> <p>Dr. Clare van Halsema is a clinician undertaking specialist training in Infectious Diseases in the UK. She is currently a research fellow at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and has been based at the Aurum Institute in Johannesburg, working on epidemiological studies in the context of Thibela TB, a cluster-randomised trial of community wide isoniazid preventive therapy among gold miners in South Africa. Her work includes studies on drug-resistant tuberculosis, non-tuberculous mycobacteria and investigation of individuals for tuberculosis in gold mine health services.</p> | <p>Good tuberculosis treatment outcomes and no evidence of increased drug resistance in individuals previously exposed to isoniazid preventive therapy in a population with high HIV prevalence</p> |
| <p>Young Investigator Prize: Women, Girls and HIV</p> | <p>Dr. Linnet N. Masese Kenya</p> <p>Dr. Linnet N. Masese completed her medical degree at the University of Nairobi, Kenya in 2003. She received a Master's degree in Public Health (Epidemiology & International Health) from the University of Washington in Seattle, USA in 2008. Dr. Masese currently serves as the Clinic Section Head at the University of Nairobi/University of Washington Mombasa Field Site. She is</p> | <p>A prospective cohort study of the effect of antiretroviral therapy on sexual risk behavior in a high-risk cohort of Kenyan women</p> |

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| | <p>supported through the Fogarty International Center through an Advanced In-Country Scholar appointment awarded by the UW's International AIDS Research and Training program. In this capacity, she is leading two studies entitled "Extending the durability of first-line therapy: a pilot study of directly administered antiretroviral therapy" and "Vaginal Health: An Innovative Behavioral Approach to Decrease HIV/STI Transmission". In September 2009, Dr. Masese will begin her studies as a pre-doctoral trainee in the UW's PhD program in Epidemiology.</p> | |
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For further information:

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