

Notable Award to Rett investigator Dr. Monica Justice

IRSF would like to congratulate Dr. Monica Justice and Baylor College of Medicine (BCM) in Houston, TX for their significant NIH award of \$34 million for their Knockout Mouse Phenotyping project funded by a trans-National Institutes of Health Mouse Initiative. BCM is one of three groups that received a total of \$110 million from this NIH initiative to build a “library” of knockout mice over the next five years, which will allow scientists to identify the function of important protein-coding genes and to better understand disease in a more efficient manner.

Goals of the Knockout Mouse Phenotyping project:

- Five thousand strains of knockout mice will be created and their phenotypes (or physical characteristics) will be determined. Knockout mice are defined as mice that lack a specific gene. This gene can either be lost in all tissues or lost under specific conditions such as the lack of a gene in a specific tissue or at a specific time during animal development.
- The project will focus on the function of mammalian genes. By characterizing the physical, behavioral, and other features of the mice, researchers will have a better idea of what each gene does.

IRSF sees the great value in this Knockout Mouse Phenotyping project, which aims to improve mouse models of disease and make them more easily accessible to researchers around the world. Many of the genes to be assessed are implicated in autism spectrum disorders, and will provide information on the relative contribution of individual genes to the spectrum of symptoms seen in Rett Syndrome. The project has the potential of driving pre-clinical translational research forward, and we hope it will also move therapies for Rett syndrome closer to fruition.

For more information, please visit:

Investigator Spotlight on Monica Justice, PhD

<http://www.rettsyndrome.org/content/view/767/944/#justice>

BCM press release

<http://www.bcm.edu/news/item.cfm?newsID=4503>

Knockout Mouse Phenotyping Project

<http://commonfund.nih.gov/KOMP2/>

NIH Knockout Mouse Project

<http://www.nih.gov/science/models/mouse/knockout/index.html>