

PRESS RELEASE

Battling chronic lung disease in preterm infants

EFCNI establishes the CaPaNi Research Award, worth \$ 100,000



The 2009 CaPaNi research award goes to Prof. Dr. Mario Rüdiger (3. f.l.) Prof. Dr. Ursula Felderhoff-Müser, (Scientific advisory board EFCNI), Robert Wells (Artist 1. Newborn Charity-Song), Prof. Dr. Mario Rüdiger, Jacob Samuel (Artist 1. Newborn Charity-Song), Silke Mader (Chairwoman of the executive board EFCNI), Jürgen Popp (Board of Trustee, EFCNI)

Brussels, 2.12.2009 (jt) – **50 per cent of extremely preterm infants suffer from chronic lung disease (CLD). This disorder, which causes chronic modifications in the lungs, is a serious problem among preterm infants which persists into adulthood. The European Foundation for the Care of Newborn Infants (EFCNI) has now joined the battle against chronic lung disease, providing support in the shape of its first**

research award, which carries \$ 100,000 of funding. The 2009 CaPaNi research award goes to Prof. Dr. Mario Rüdiger at the Neonatology/Pediatric Intensive Medicine department at the Carl Gustav Carus University Clinic in Dresden, where Prof. Rüdiger and his team conduct research into preventive measures and treatments against this chronic disease. A paramount goal of the EFCNI foundation is to promote and support research which benefits preterm and newborn infants.

Battling chronic lung disease

In premature babies, chronic lung disease causes modifications in the tissues and structure of the lungs, impairing gas exchange. As a result, lung problems such as increased susceptibility to pneumonia arise and may persist into late adulthood. Premature babies thus affected also have a higher mortality rate and are more likely to suffer problems in neurological development later in life.

CaPaNi – Research for the smallest of the small

With this in mind, in 2009 the EFCNI is focusing its support on neonatal pulmonary research in the shape of the CaPaNi Research Award, carrying a cash grant of \$ 100,000. After inviting applications for the award from all over Europe, the EFCNI commissioned external appraisers to examine the applications received. The final decision was taken by an independent international

Scientific Advisory Board headed by distinguished researcher Prof. Dr. Pierre Gressens, INSERM, Paris, France.

"The CaPaNi Research Award enables support to be given to outstanding innovative research into improving care for preterm infants. Because of its unique status in Europe, it is enormously significant", stresses Gressens.

The research award was presented to Prof. Dr. Mario Rüdiger at a ceremony in Brussels. At the Carl Gustav Carus University Clinic in Dresden, Prof. Rüdiger conducts research into the possibility of preventing the development of chronic lung disease with a drug currently in use in neonatology – a field that is highly complex and thus correspondingly costly.

"We are happy to support Prof. Rüdiger's research into protecting premature infants, and give our thanks to Abbott for their assistance in realizing the CaPaNi Award", states Dr. Matthias Keller, member of the Board of Trustees with responsibility for research support at EFCNI.

Up to 50 per cent of extremely preterm infants affected

"I am delighted that we can use the award funds to continue our research into the prevention of chronic lung disease in preterm infants. Up to 50 per cent of extremely preterm infants suffer from chronic lung disease – a disorder associated not only with lifelong lung problems, but also with impaired neurological development. Because health problems in preterm infants are largely unknown in comparison to other widespread health disorders, funding for the development of preventive and therapeutic measures is limited. I am thus all the more grateful to the Foundation for selecting my work for the CaPaNi Research Award", explains Prof. Dr. Rüdiger.

The name of the award, "CaPaNi", is made up of the initial syllables of Caroline, Patrizia und Niklas – the names of preterm triplets born and lost to Jürgen Popp, member of the EFCNI Board of Trustees. Their names now stand for preterm infants throughout Europe, in desperate need of a strong lobby in areas including science and research.

The CaPaNi Award was made possible by a grant from Abbott, the global health care company.

The European Foundation for the Care of Newborn Infants (EFCNI) is both a network for everyone involved with preterm and sick newborns, and a forum for scientists. Its declared objective is to bring about long-term improvement in the care situation for these infants, helping to ensure that Europe's largest group of child patients receive the attention and the lobby they deserve. More information at www.efcni.org.

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