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**The HERA Foundation Awards Johns Hopkins University Scientists with OSB1 Grant**

Recipients selected for unique approach to early detection, treatment and prevention of ovarian cancer

**BOULDER, COLO. (March 26, 2009)** The HERA Women’s Cancer Foundation announces three scientists from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Md. are recipients of its 2009 OSB1 Grant. They include: Drs. Dan Lu, Yuan Tian and Marie-France Penet. OSB1 is an acronym for Ovarian Cancer Seed Bursary grant and also refers to the “Outside-the-Box” thinking the recipients demonstrate in their approach to research new directions in the treatment, prevention and early detection of ovarian cancer. One in 71 women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer this year. With early detection, more than 90% will survive. Currently, only 24% of ovarian cancer is caught early. <sup>1</sup>

The OSB1 grant is awarded annually to Ph.D. and M.D. fellows at Johns Hopkins University and M.D. Anderson Cancer Center at the University of Texas in Houston and is reviewed by an expert panel. Applications are judged based on innovation, science, credentials and significance to ovarian cancer. Since the program’s inception in 2003 the HERA Foundation has awarded 16 grants totaling \$305,000.

Second-time recipient of the HERA OSB1 grant, Dr. Yuan Tian, 31, received her Ph.D at the China Pharmaceutical University in 2005, followed by a postdoctoral fellowship in Proteomics from the Institute for Systems Biology. Tian joined Johns Hopkins University in 2007 and a year later earned the 2008 Young Investigator Award in Pathology. During Tian’s 2008 research, she was able to identify a list of protein markers to discriminate the different subtypes of ovarian cancer and normal ovarian tissue. “This gives us more confidence that our approach is sensitive for identification and quantification of the tumor-specific extracellular proteins that can be potential markers for ovarian cancer prognosis and diagnosis in serum,” says Tian. With the assistance of the HERA Foundation’s grant, she hopes to detect subtype-specific glycoproteins from ovarian tumors and evaluate their utilities to help in the prognosis and diagnosis of ovarian cancer.

Dr. Dan Lu, 36, received her medical degree from China Medical University, finished chief-residency training

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<sup>1</sup> 2008 American Cancer Society

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in OB/GYN in 2000, and later earned a Ph.D in Biochemistry from Ohio State University. During the Ph.D program at OSU, Lu studied under Dr. Tsonwin Hai and focused on the function of ATF3, a stress-induced gene, during cancer development. Lu was awarded the Ohio State Biochemistry Program fellowship in 2000-2001. Enrolled in Johns Hopkins University since 2006, Lu studied gynecological tumor immunology and immune evasion under Dr. T.C. Wu. Later Lu studied the identification of new tumor antigens in ovarian cancer under Dr. Richard Roden. Lu's proposed work with funding from the OSB1 grant, aims to develop a more efficient screening methodology to identify cell surface tumor antigens as target therapy of ovarian cancer.

The youngest of the grant recipients, Marie-France Penet, 29, received her Ph.D in Biology from University of Aix-Marseille II in 2005 before she came to Johns Hopkins University. During her stay, she had been working on prostate and breast cancer models for new approaches in imaging techniques. This is her first study with ovarian cancer, and she hope to provide a novel image-guided molecular targeted approach to ovarian cancer treatment.

“This year's recipients represent new directions in science that the HERA Foundation envisioned when first laying the groundwork for the program,” explains Dr. Jill Slansky, principal investigator at University of Colorado Denver and vice president of the HERA Foundation's board. “The OSB1 grant acts as an incubator for these talents and enables young scientists to test novel promising ideas in ovarian cancer research. HERA is honored to be able to support the work of these dynamic and innovative researchers.”

Women who are diagnosed in an early stage have roughly a 90 percent chance of a five-year survival rate. Grants like the OSB1 are important to find new directions in early detection, treatment and prevention to help save women's lives. For more information on the OSB1 grant or the HERA Foundation, please visit [www.herafoundation.org](http://www.herafoundation.org).

### **About the HERA Foundation**

*The HERA Foundation is a registered 501 (c) 3, whose mission is to stop the loss of mothers, daughters, wives, sisters, partners and girlfriends from ovarian cancer by empowering women to take control of their health, empowering the medical community to find new directions in ovarian cancer research and empowering communities to provide support. For more information, visit [www.herafoundation.org](http://www.herafoundation.org).*

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