
Gladstone Scientist Receives American Heart Association's Prestigious Katz Prize for Cardiovascular Research

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SAN FRANCISCO, CA—November 16, 2011— Li Qian, PhD, has won the Louis N. and Arnold M. Katz Basic Science Research Prize for Young Investigators from the American Heart Association (AHA), marking the first time in the prestigious award's history that a Gladstone Institutes researcher has been the recipient.

Dr. Qian is a postdoctoral fellow at Gladstone—a leading and independent biomedical-research organization—and a California Institute of Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) scholar in the laboratory of Deepak Srivastava, MD.

Announced last night at the AHA's Scientific Sessions conference in Orlando, Fla., the Katz award encourages new cardiovascular investigators to continue research careers in basic science—and is among the association's top honors. Basic science is different from applied science, in that it focuses on advancing our fundamental understanding of biology, but in this case is clearly focused on helping humans with heart disease.

Dr. Qian received the prize for her findings that non-muscle cells that normally form the architectural support for the heart can be reprogrammed into beating heart muscle cells. This reprogramming may allow scientists to transform non-beating scar tissue resulting from heart disease—and which was previously considered irreparable—into beating tissue again.

"I am very proud of Dr. Qian—and the unique environment that we have been able to develop at Gladstone to promote such discoveries," said Dr. Srivastava, who directs cardiovascular and stem cell research at Gladstone. "Five million Americans suffer from heart failure, and Dr. Qian's research will contribute to our goal of one day using cell reprogramming to regenerate muscle cells—replacing cells damaged by heart disease. Combined with Dr. Mahley's AHA award, this is an impressive week for heart research at Gladstone."

Earlier in the day, the AHA presented Gladstone Institutes Senior Investigator

and President Emeritus Robert Mahley, MD, PhD, with the 2011 AHA Distinguished Scientist Award. The award goes to those who have had a significant and lasting impact on the fields of cardiovascular research and medicine, and previous recipients include Nobel laureates Roger Tsien, PhD, of the University of California, San Diego and Martin Chalfie, PhD, from Columbia University.

While Dr. Mahley helped found Gladstone in 1979, Dr. Qian joined Gladstone in just 2007. Her interest in cardiovascular disease began as an undergraduate at Fudan University in Shanghai, China. She began her graduate work on heart development in fruit flies known as *Drosophila* in the laboratory of Dr. Rolf Bodmer at the University of Michigan, which then led her to the Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute in La Jolla, California where she earned a PhD.

About the American Heart Association

The American Heart Association is devoted to saving people from heart disease and stroke—America’s No. 1 and No. 4 killers. It teams with millions of volunteers to fund innovative research, fight for stronger public-health policies, and provide lifesaving tools and information to prevent and treat these diseases. The Dallas-based association is the nation’s oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke.

About the Gladstone Institutes

Gladstone is an independent and nonprofit biomedical-research organization dedicated to accelerating the pace of scientific discovery and innovation to prevent illness and cure patients suffering from cardiovascular disease, neurological disease, or viral infections. Gladstone is affiliated with the University of California, San Francisco.

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