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Gladstone's Lennart Mucke Wins MetLife Foundation Award

Prestigious prize recognizes Dr. Mucke's pioneering Alzheimer's disease research

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SAN FRANCISCO, CA—May 15, 2013— [Lennart Mucke](#), MD, who directs neurological research at the [Gladstone Institutes](#), today received the [MetLife Foundation's 2013 Award for Medical Research in Alzheimer's Disease](#) at a scientific briefing and awards ceremony in New York.

"We have selected Dr. Mucke because his work has provided major insights that are likely to lead to new Alzheimer's disease treatments—which are desperately needed," said [David M. Holtzman, MD](#), chair of the *MetLife Awards for Research in Alzheimer's Disease Advisory Committee*.

To be sure, the MetLife award—which provides outstanding researchers with funds to pursue new scientific ideas—could not come at a more important time. Currently, there are no effective treatments to slow, prevent or halt Alzheimer's—which robs people of critical brain functions including the ability to retain memories. As our nation's sixth leading cause of death, Alzheimer's afflicts one in nine Americans aged 65 or older, according to the Alzheimer's Association. The number of those with Alzheimer's is expected to nearly triple by 2050—threatening to overwhelm our healthcare system.

Dr. Mucke—who is also a professor of neurology and the Joseph B. Martin Distinguished Professor of Neuroscience at the University of California, San Francisco, with which Gladstone is affiliated—wins the award along with [Yueming Li, PhD](#), member and professor at the Sloan-Kettering Institute, and director of the Graduate Program in Pharmacology at Weill Medical College of Cornell University.

Inspired by a grandfather who had Alzheimer's disease, Dr. Mucke has spent his career uncovering mechanisms that lead to memory loss and behavioral abnormalities in Alzheimer's and related conditions. He founded Gladstone's multi-pronged research program on Alzheimer's in 1998, and has since identified molecular and cellular processes by which amyloid-beta proteins, which accumulate in the brains of Alzheimer patients, impair cognitive functions. He has demonstrated that amyloid-beta—together with tau, another protein that accumulates in the brains of Alzheimer's patients—disrupts brain-network activity. He also has shown that reducing tau levels, or suppressing the abnormal excitability of these networks with drugs, can both reduce cognitive and behavioral deficits in animal models of Alzheimer's disease.

Ultimately, Dr. Mucke expects that the effective prevention and treatment of Alzheimer's will have to include multiple therapeutic strategies—in much the same way as hypertension or cancer often require the combination of different treatments. To this end,

he has identified and is pursuing new therapeutic targets and experimental strategies to block disease-causing processes and to make the brain more resistant to disease. Additionally, Dr. Mucke is currently focused on investigating the roles of [DNA damage](#) and aging-related factors in cognition and cognitive disorders.

“I am deeply honored to receive the MetLife Foundation Award for Medical Research in Alzheimer’s Disease,” said Dr. Mucke. “The need to decipher the causes of Alzheimer’s and to find better therapeutic solutions has never been more important—or urgent. The award will allow us to intensify and expedite our efforts to achieve these critical goals.”

Among Dr. Mucke’s previous research awards are the Khalid [Iqbal](#) Lifetime Achievement Award and the Zenith Award from the Alzheimer’s Association, as well as the [Potamkin](#) Prize from the American Academy of Neurology. Before joining Gladstone in 1996, Dr. Mucke was an associate professor at The Scripps Research Institute.

Currently, Dr. Mucke is a member of the American Neurological Association, the Association of American Physicians and the Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives. He has served on the National Advisory Council on Aging for the National Institutes of Health and the Medical and Scientific Advisory Council of the Alzheimer’s Association. He is currently member of the Senate of the German Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases.

About the MetLife Awards for Medical Research in Alzheimer’s Disease

Now in their 27th year, the awards provide outstanding researchers with an opportunity to freely pursue new ideas. MetLife Foundation established the awards in 1986 to recognize and reward scientists demonstrating significant contributions to the understanding of Alzheimer’s disease. The [American Federation for Aging Research](#) (AFAR) manages the *MetLife Foundation Awards for Medical Research in Alzheimer’s Disease*. Founded in 1981, AFAR has championed the cause and supported the funding of science in healthier aging and age-related medicine.

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, treat and cure cardiovascular, viral and neurological diseases. Gladstone is affiliated with the University of California, San Francisco.

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