



**Let me American Brain Foundation
Research Advisory Committee Meeting
July 15, 2022
3:00 p.m. ET / 2:00 p.m. CT / 1:00 p.m. MT / 12:00 p.m. PT
Zoom Call**

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance: Robert Griggs, MD, Chair; Jose Biller, MD; Jose E. Cavazos, MD, PhD; Jacqueline French, MD; Mark Mehler, MD; Bruce Ovbiagele, MD, MSc, MAS; Reisa Sperling, MD, MMSc; Phyllis C. Zee, MD; David Dodick, MD;

Guest: Jeffrey Rosenfeld, MD, PhD

Staff: Jane Ransom, ED; Julia Miglets-Nelson, PhD; Samantha Ross;

Excused: Na Tosha Gatson, MD, PhD; Paul George, MD, PhD; James Grotta, MD; Walter Koroshetz, MD; Ronald Petersen, MD, PhD; Michelle Maxwell; Mary Post, MBA, CAE; Sue Rodemeyer; Eugene Scharf, MD; Gordon Smith, MD;

Call to Order - The meeting was called to order by Dr. Robert Griggs at 2:01 p.m. CT. The meeting minutes of April 22nd, 2022, were approved. Guest Jeffrey Rosenfeld was introduced.

2023 Scientific Breakthrough Award – presented by Berch Griggs and Julia Miglets-Nelson, PhD

- Nominations are open (via the AAN platform) and needed. Deadline will be August 1. Last year's winner, Dr. Hauser, is now chairing our Neuroinflammation Initiative, so the connections we make with this award do echo in our later work. Past nominees are already being considered.

2023 Next Generation Research Grants – presented by Julia Miglets-Nelson, PhD

- 15 awards available to early-career researchers, applications due September 1st via the AAN's website. We do need reviewers, and selection calls will be held November 3rd. Please spread the word!
- Dr. George wanted to express a worry that more "general" researchers might not find a way to channel their work into an application, but it appears that these fifteen awards do cover a wide range of conditions. Furthermore, some awards that are not represented in the 2023 group may return in 2024.

Neuroinflammation Initiative – Presented by Berch Griggs

- We've put together a ten-member scientific committee to develop the scope and scale of the initiative, chaired by the aforementioned Dr. Hauser. There is also some international presence represented among those ten members.
- ABF Staff will meet with potential funding partners in late July/early August for their input on shaping the award, as well as funding it. Following the LBD initiative, partners (both disease-focused organizations as well as industry) expressed an interest in being more active participants in creating the scope of the award.

- We're hoping to find a focus that will "lift all boats", and really embody the spirit of "cure one, cure many". How can we create bridges among researchers, and get out of the silo model?
- We're asking the represented groups what their focuses are and hope to find themes that tie conditions together.
- Goal is to offer the award or awards as part of the Academy's 2024 cycle, with application process to happen in 2023.
- We might want to invite Dr. Hauser to a future RAC meeting to discuss developments.

Strategic Planning Discussion – Research – Presented by Berch Griggs

- Drafting the mission and vision of the ABF, and how can the RAC come up with strategies that accomplish our goals? How do we measure success?
 - o Mission: To accelerate breakthrough research across all brain diseases and optimize brain health for everyone.
 - o Vision: Life without brain disease.
- Do our programs focus as much on general brain health and prevention as it should? Other organizations are focusing on prevention and mitigation of risk factors, rather than simply cures. Other health focuses (heart, cancer, etc.) have made this leap, and it might serve us well to consider following suit.
 - o Dr. Sperling: "Mechanisms of resiliency" is a great focus, even if it's not the easiest thing to fund. There's no partner organization, like there is for Alzheimer's or MS, but it's still vital.
 - Sleep, exercise, and a balanced diet are universally good for you...but why?
 - o Dr. Mehler would like to see a focus on diseases that have yet to manifest into symptoms, when conditions are often too complex or too far gone to treat.
 - He also brings up that many "brain diseases" start outside of the brain or have mechanisms that involve other parts of the body, even beyond the nervous system.
- Research Position Statement: "The ABF is the partner uniting across all brain diseases and disorders. The ABF recognizes that when we cure one, we cure many. The ABF foregrounds interdisciplinary research. The ABF prioritizes outstanding collaborations between those working to prevent, treat, and cure brain diseases."
 - o Could potentially combine: "Foregrounds interdisciplinary research that recognizes that when we cure one, we cure many."
- Dr. Biller: Could we be targeting our message to a younger audience, when education on other forms of health (healthy diets, exercise, tobacco/drug prevention) are often so prevalent? TBI prevention, for example.
- Are we on the right track regarding health equity?
 - o One of the AAN research awards is focused on health disparities.
 - o Specifically funding minority scholars is also a worthwhile focus.
 - The AAN has a pipeline of programs that support diverse scholars. This could be another great opportunity for collaboration between our organizations.
 - o An additional seed grant was given this year in Autism research that also addresses disparities.
- Opportunities:
 - o DEI Support
 - Health disparities research (CRTS, seed grants, etc)
 - Support for researchers underrepresented in medicine
 - COVID-19 neurologic impact, particularly on underrepresented communities
 - o General (non-disease specific) early career awards
 - o Large-scale research initiatives that "lift all boats" (Cure one, cure many)
 - o Generative collaboration with AAN Science Committee around research priorities.
- The AAN has been restrictive when it comes to in-industry representation on the planning stage of an initiative. The perception is that many will have different priorities when it comes

to an initiative's goals. Do we accept pharma companies' input when we put these together? The team seemed generally positive, with some cautions.

- How can we break down the silos between academia and industry in a way that effectively moves research forward?
- Dr. Zee: "I think that they can participate but not have a vote in who or what gets funded."
- Dr. Mehler commented that the lack of contact with elite scientists in the pharmaceutical industry while on the AAN Science Committee limited a lot of potential for growth.
- Dr. Rosenfeld noted that some pharma researchers may be limited by restrictions placed on them by their own companies.
- Dr. French: We just need to be aware of conflicts of interest.

Meeting adjourned at 3:27 pm.