

CJD Foundation Research Grant Program



CREUTZFELDT-JAKOB DISEASE
FOUNDATION, INC.

Supporting Families Affected by Prion Disease

Huge thank you to our donors

We couldn't do this without you!

The Michael H. Cole Memorial Research Grant, contributed by Jeanne Cole

The Sherry Maxwell Fabian Memorial Grant, contributed by Tom Fabian

The Chuck Fear Memorial Research Grant, contributed by Pamela Fear and Family

The Fred Glavan/Lee Gallagher Family Memorial Grant, contributed by the Glavan and Gallagher Families

The Maria D. McConnell Memorial Grant, contributed by Philip McConnell and Family

The Dora Middendorf Memorial Grant, contributed by Renee Middendorf and Family

The Daniel Nugent Memorial Grant, contributed by Carmine Cafiero, Family and Friends

The José A. Piriz and Sonia E. Piriz Memorial Research Grant, contributed by Karla Piriz and Lauren Esposito

The Marsha K. Snively Memorial Research Grant, contributed by the Snively Family

The Strides for CJD Grant, contributed by the Families of the CJD Foundation



Research Grant Program

- Grants awarded each January to international recipients
- Topics include pathophysiology, molecular mechanisms, cell and animal disease models, diagnostics, clinical and translational research, studies identifying treatment targets or biomarkers, genetics, bioinformatics, or other areas related to human prion diseases
- Recipients present at CJDF Annual Family Conference 18 months after receiving award
- Grants can be 1 Year (up to \$50K) or 2 year (up to \$100K) and fellowships are now available

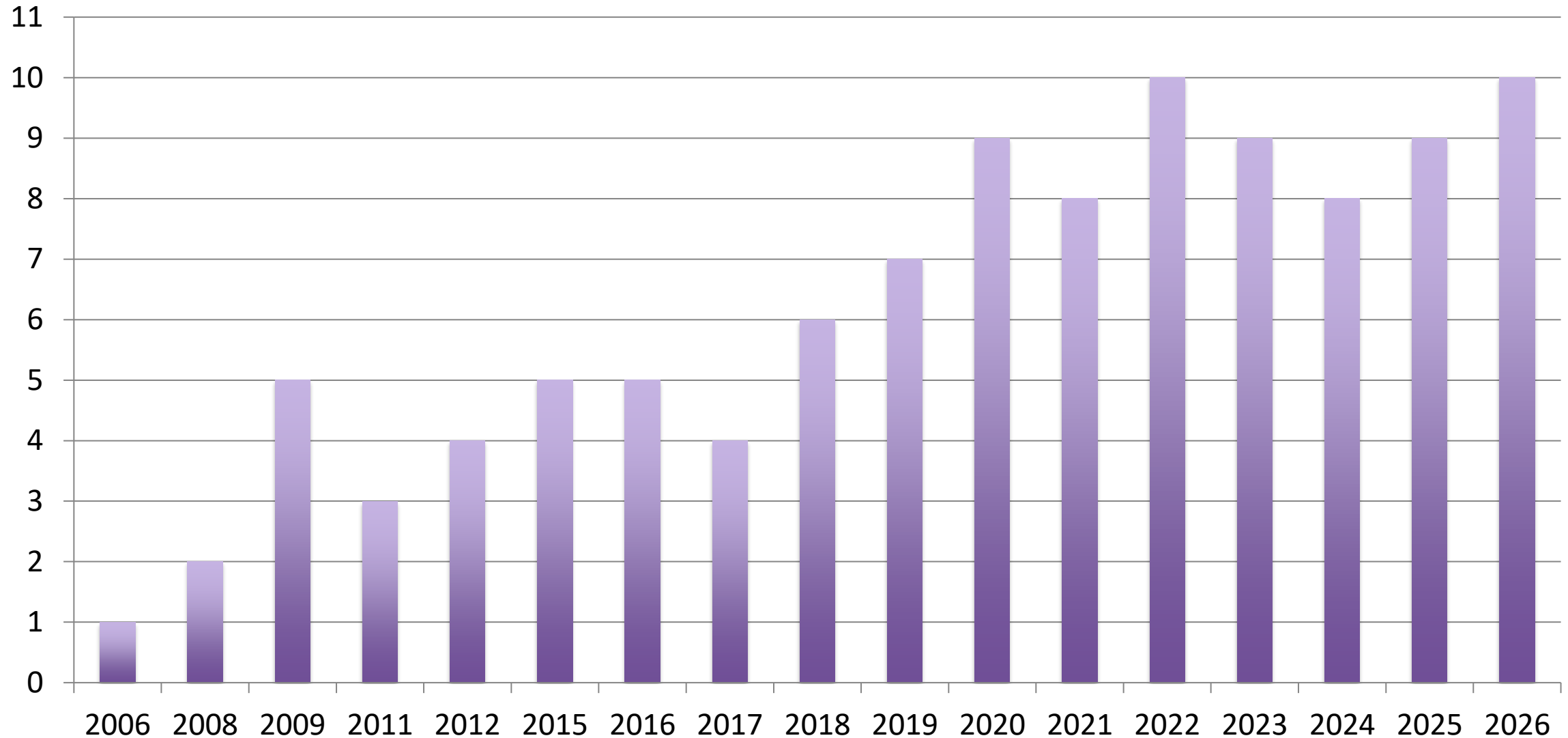


2024 Research Grants

- Awarded 8 grants and 2 fellowships in 2026 for a total of total 104 grants
- **2025** awardees presented reports in July 2026
- **2026** awardees will present reports in July 2027
- Funding for **2026/27** grants looks strong, thanks to Family Memorial Grants, donations to the CJD Foundation, and Strides for CJD events

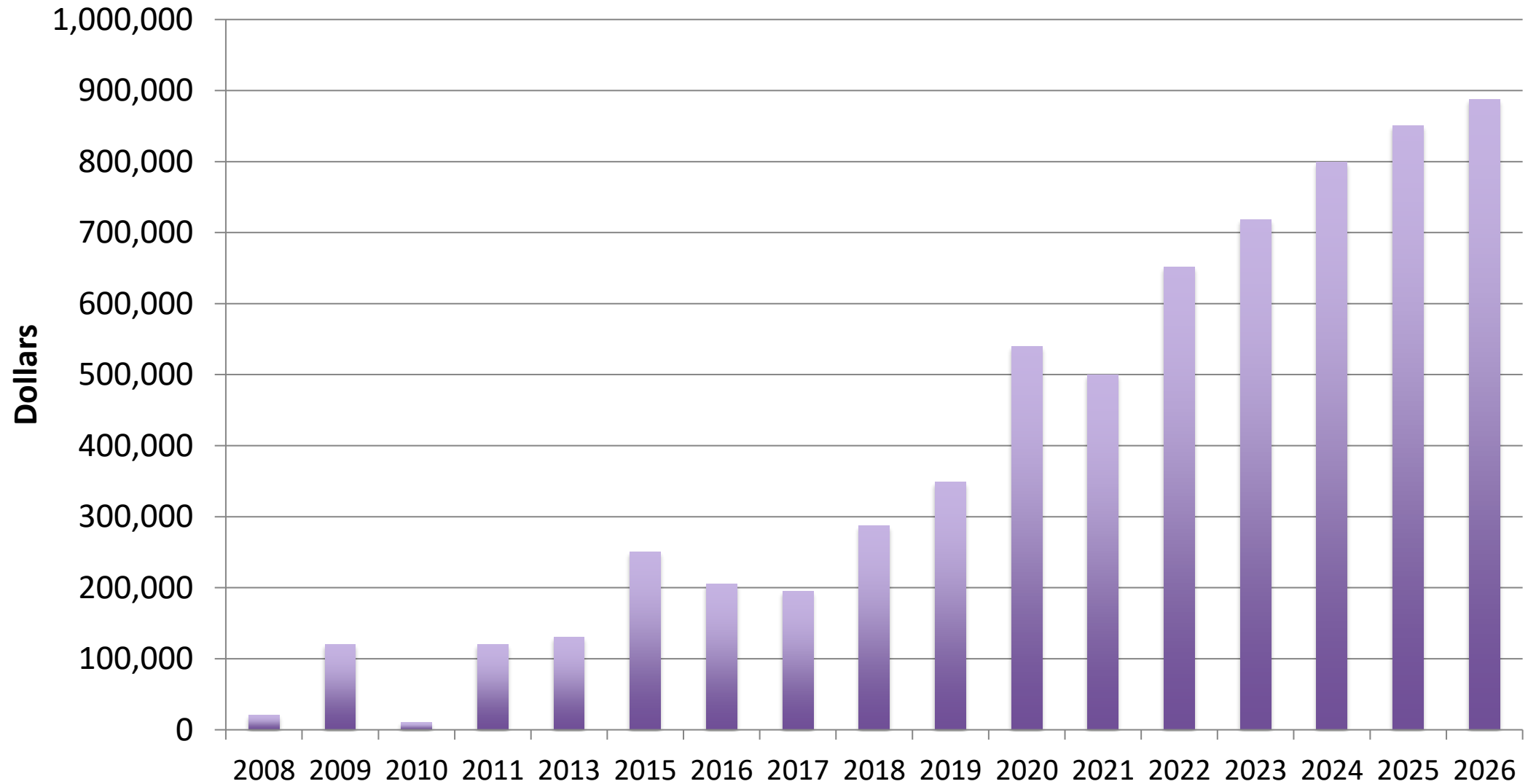


Number of CJDF Research Grants





Funds Awarded





Sources of Research Grant Funding

- General donations to the CJD Foundation
- Strides for CJD fundraising
- Memorial Grants
- Grant Builders / families who host fundraisers



Research Grant Cycle

- Call for Applications from researchers: May 2026
- Applications reviewed by Scientific Advisory Committee: Summer/Fall 2026
- Donor signs grant agreement/raises funds: by September 2026
- CJDF awards grants to researchers: January 2027
- Researcher presents update at CJD Foundation Conference: July 2028



Awarded 8 Research Grants and 2 Fellowships in 2026



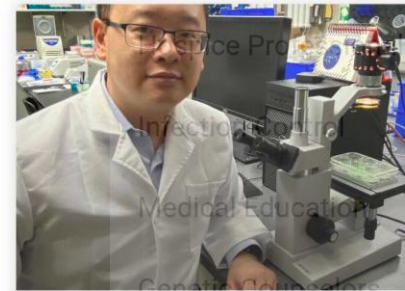
Joaquín Castilla,
PhD



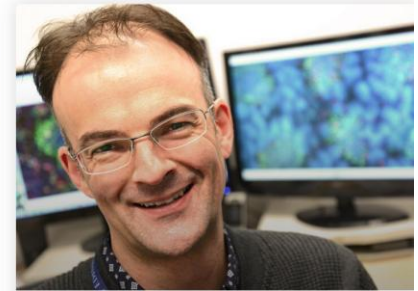
David A. Harris, MD,
PhD



Vanessa
Laversenne, PhD



Jingxin Wang, PhD



Prof. Neil A. Mabbott



Daniel Ojeda-Juarez,
PhD



Paulina Soto, PhD



Thomas J. Trainer



Simon Mead, PhD

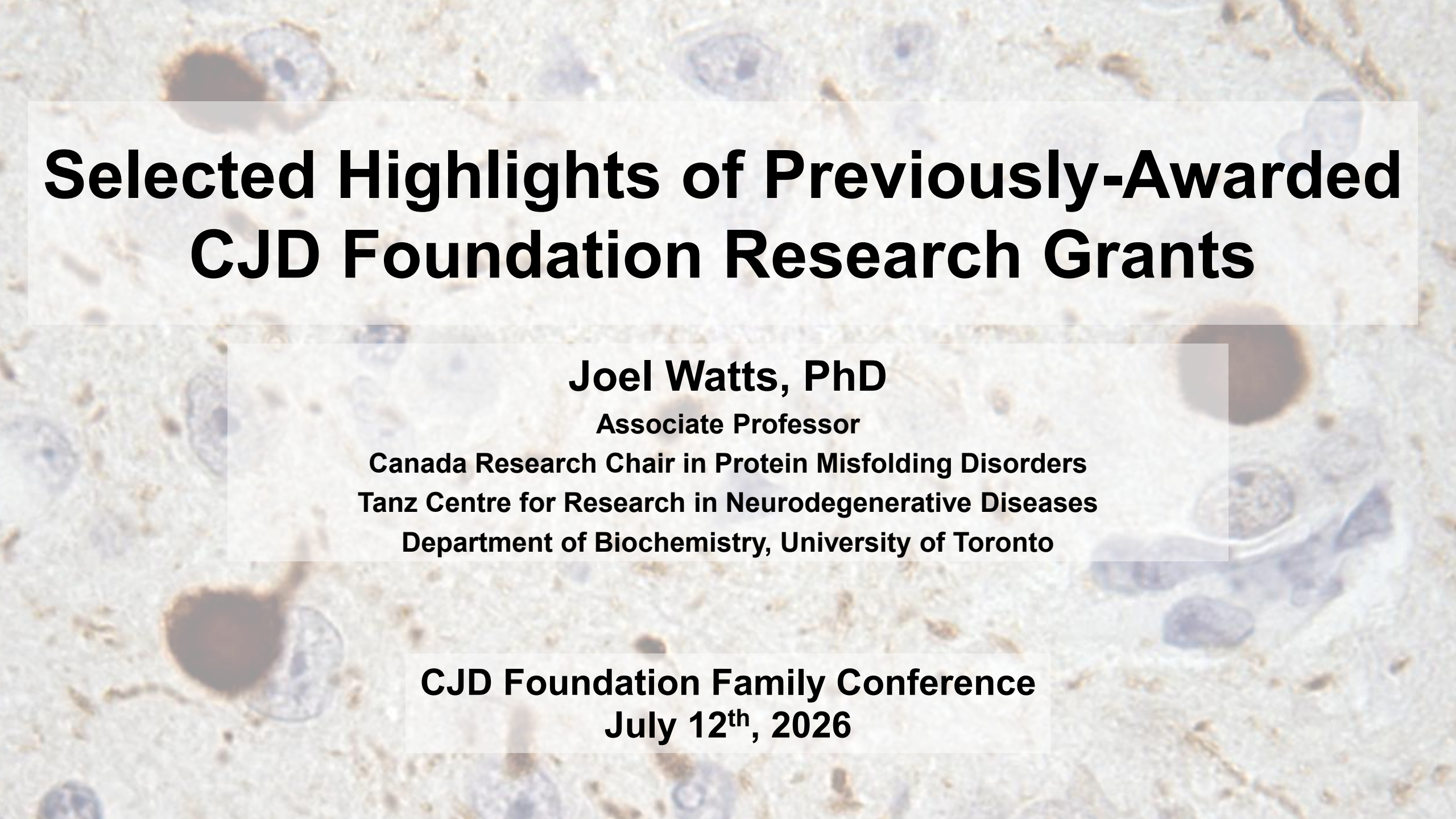


Adriano Aguzzi, MD
and Vangelis Bouris,



Thank You to All Who Support the Grants Program

- Donors to CJD Foundation and Strides for CJD
- Family Memorial Grant Funders
- Researchers
- Scientific Advisory Committee



Selected Highlights of Previously-Awarded CJD Foundation Research Grants

Joel Watts, PhD

Associate Professor

Canada Research Chair in Protein Misfolding Disorders

Tanz Centre for Research in Neurodegenerative Diseases

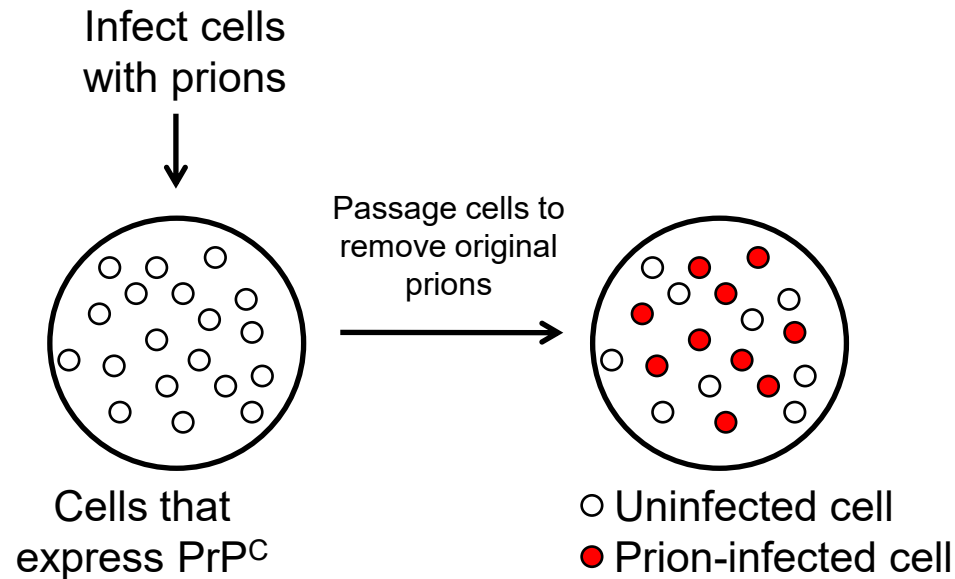
Department of Biochemistry, University of Toronto

CJD Foundation Family Conference

July 12th, 2026

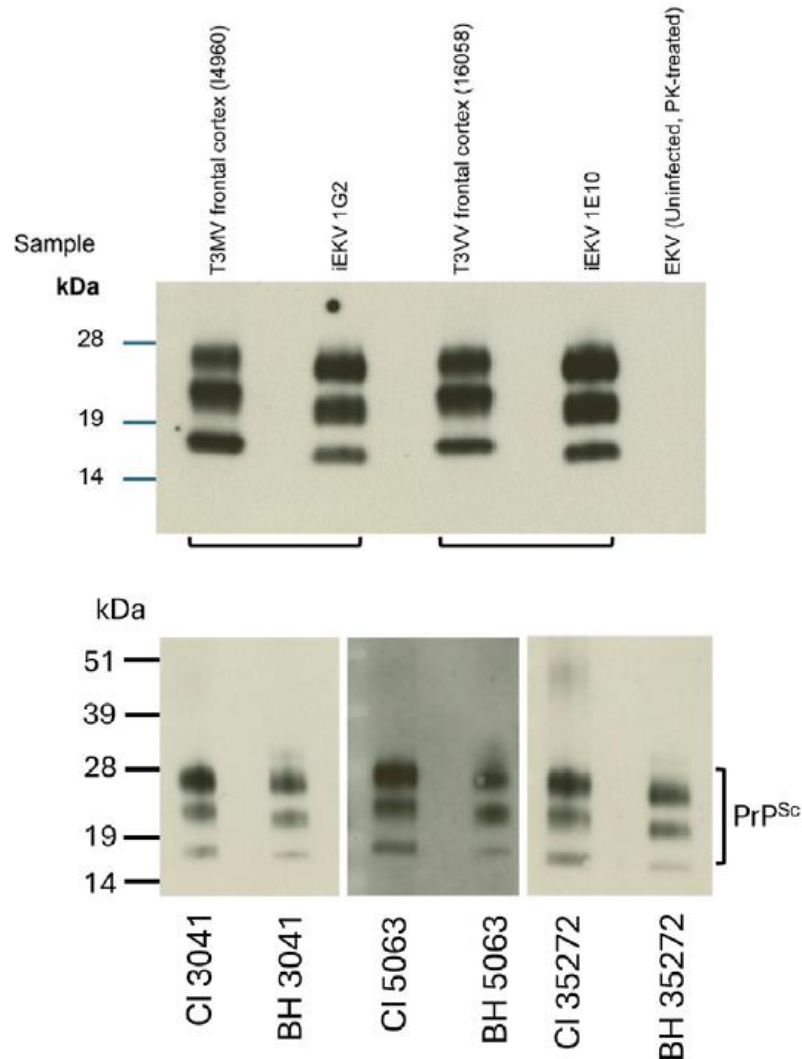
Elucidating the Factors Required for Propagating Human Prions

- Grant recipients: Dr. Parmjit Jat, Dr. Melissa Rayner, and Dr. Simon Mead
- Year: 2023



Problem: It has never been possible to replicate human prions in immortalized cultured cells

Elucidating the Factors Required for Propagating Human Prions



PNAS

RESEARCH ARTICLE

BIOCHEMISTRY

[OPEN ACCESS](#)



A scalable, dividing cell model for the robust propagation and quantification of human sporadic Creutzfeldt–Jakob disease prions

Akin Nihat^{a,b,1} , Parineeta Arora^{a,1} , Christian Schmidt^a, Melissa L. D. Rayner^c , Jacqueline Linehan^a, Sebastian Brandner^{d,e}, Simon Mead^{a,b} , John Collinge^{a,b} , and Parmjit S. Jat^{a,2}

PNAS

RESEARCH ARTICLE

CELL BIOLOGY

[OPEN ACCESS](#)

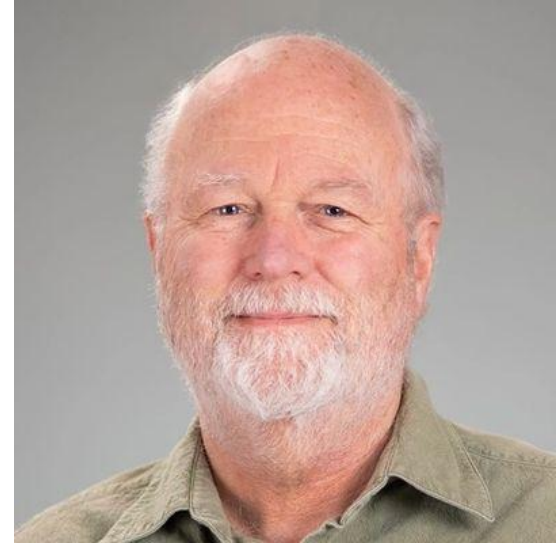


Strain-specific propagation of variant Creutzfeldt–Jakob disease prions in humanized neural cells

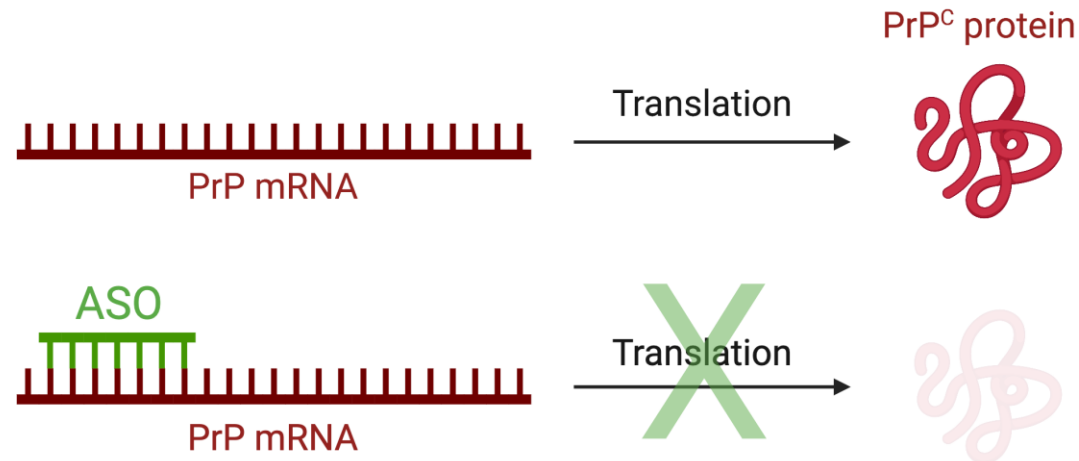
Melissa L. D. Rayner^{a,b} , Parineeta Arora^a , Jacqueline M. Linehan^a, Helena Ros^a, Akin Nihat^{a,c}, Fabio Argentina^a, Connor Preston^a , Christian Schmidt^a , Juan M. Ribes^a , Peter-Christian Klöhn^a , Simon Mead^{a,c} , Sebastian Brandner^{d,e}, John Collinge^{a,c,1} , and Parmjit S. Jat^{a,1,2}

Antisense Oligonucleotides to delay or prevent onset of prion disease in mice

- Grant recipient: Dr. Byron Caughey
- Year: 2016



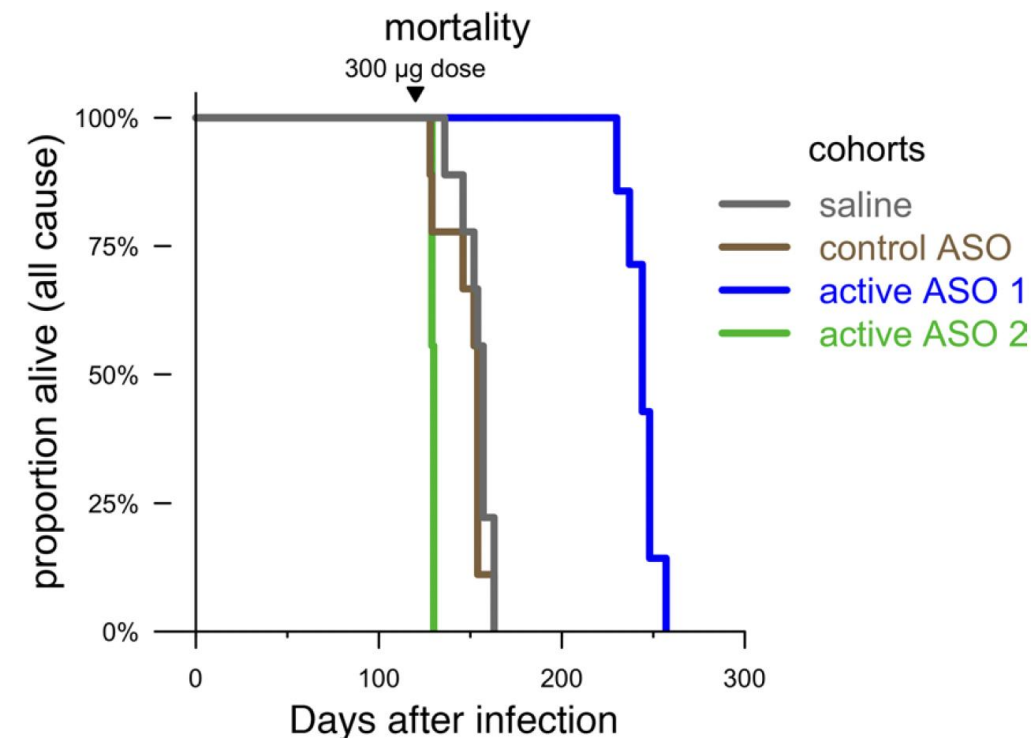
DNA $\longrightarrow$ mRNA $\longrightarrow$ Protein



Antisense Oligonucleotides to delay or prevent onset of prion disease in mice

Antisense oligonucleotides extend survival of prion-infected mice

Gregory J. Raymond,¹ Hien Tran Zhao,² Brent Race,¹ Lynne D. Raymond,¹ Katie Williams,¹ Eric E. Swayze,² Samantha Graffam,³ Jason Le,³ Tyler Caron,³ Jacquelyn Stathopoulos,³ Rhonda O'Keefe,³ Lori L. Lubke,¹ Andrew G. Reidenbach,³ Allison Kraus,¹ Stuart L. Schreiber,³ Curt Mazur,² Deborah E. Cabin,⁴ Jeffrey B. Carroll,⁵ Eric Vallabh Minikel,^{1,3,6,7} Holly Kordasiewicz,² Byron Caughey,¹ and Sonia M. Vallabh^{1,3,6,7}



PrProfile: A Study to Assess the Safety, Tolerability, Pharmacokinetics and Pharmacodynamics of ION717

ClinicalTrials.gov ID ⓘ NCT06153966

Sponsor ⓘ Ionis Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

Information provided by ⓘ Ionis Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (Responsible Party)

Last Update Posted ⓘ 2026-04-24

Recruiting ⓘ

[Find Contact Information](#)

[Check who can join](#)

Assessing efficacy of zinc-finger repressors of prion protein as a therapeutic for prion disease

- Grant recipient: Dr. Sonia Vallabh
- Year: 2020



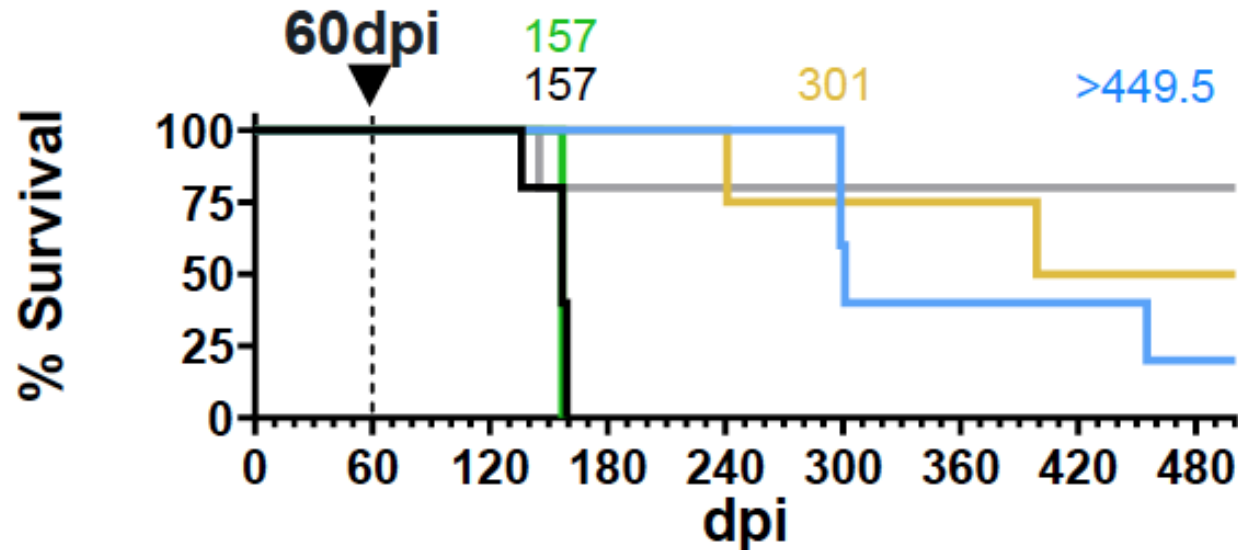
ZF Repressor



Transcription



Assessing efficacy of zinc-finger repressors of prion protein as a therapeutic for prion disease



Chou *et al.*, *bioRxiv*, 2025 (pre-print)

Brainwide silencing of prion protein by AAV-mediated delivery of an engineered compact epigenetic editor

Edwin N. Neumann^{1,2,†}, Tessa M. Bertozzi^{1,3,†}, Elaine Wu¹, Fiona Serack⁴, John W. Harvey⁴, Pamela P. Brauer⁴, Catherine P. Pirtle⁴, Alissa Coffey⁴, Michael Howard⁵, Nikita Kamath⁴, Kenney Lenz⁵, Kenia Guzman⁵, Michael H. Raymond^{6,7}, Ahmad S. Khalil^{6,7,8}, Benjamin E. Deverman⁴, Eric Vallabh Minikel^{4,9}, Sonia M. Vallabh^{4,9,*}, Jonathan S. Weissman^{1,3,10,11,*}

Article

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41591-024-03466-w>

In vivo base editing extends lifespan of a humanized mouse model of prion disease

Received: 20 August 2024

Accepted: 12 December 2024

Published online: 14 January 2025

Check for updates

Melrul An^{1,2,3,10}, Jessie R. Davis^{1,2,3,10}, Jonathan M. Levy^{1,2,3}, Fiona E. Serack⁴, John W. Harvey⁴, Pamela P. Brauer⁴, Catherine P. Pirtle⁴, Klara N. Berríos^{1,2,3}, Gregory A. Newby^{1,2,3}, Wei-Hsi Yeh^{1,2,3}, Nikita Kamath⁴, Meredith Mortberg⁴, Yuan Lian⁴, Michael Howard⁵, Kendrick DeSouza-Lenz⁵, Kenia Guzman⁵, Aaron Thal⁵, Samantha Graffam⁵, Vanessa Laversenne⁴, Alissa A. Coffey⁴, Jeannine Frel⁴, Sarah E. Pierce^{1,2,3}, Jiri G. Safar⁶, Benjamin E. Deverman⁴, Eric Vallabh Minikel^{4,7,8,9}, Sonia M. Vallabh^{4,7,8,9} & David R. Liu^{1,2,3}

Take Home Messages

- Research funded through the CJD Foundation Research Grant program has led to advances in our ability to study human prion diseases and has revealed new treatment strategies
- Scientific ideas are always evolving
 - Research progress can require patience and persistence
- Continued funding of fundamental and applied prion research is imperative!
 - During periods of funding uncertainty, the availability of CJD Foundation Research Grants is especially important

The prion research community is extremely grateful to the CJD Foundation as well as friends and family of those affected by CJD for their philanthropic and fundraising efforts that enable these research grants