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Monell Center Receives \$2 Million Core Grant from NIH *Cutting-edge technologies and services will advance Center's mission*

PHILADELPHIA (October 24, 2011) -- The Monell Center has been awarded a \$2 million Core grant from NIH's National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD). The funds will be used to increase and strengthen technological and research services at the Center over the next five years.

"The centralized availability of these highly sophisticated technologies and services will augment Monell's outstanding research. This will in turn promote the Center's mission to benefit human health and well-being through advances in the science of taste and smell," said Monell Director Gary Beauchamp, Ph.D.

Headed by Monell Associate Director Robert Margolskee, M.D., Ph.D., the Core grant will support research across Monell, with top priority given to the Center's 13 NIH-funded research grants in the mission area of NIDCD.

The funding will enable three Research Cores to provide specialized expert services, equipment and training in chemical senses research techniques. Together, the Cores will increase the productivity and cost-efficiency of research at Monell by centralizing and standardizing labor-intensive and specialized tasks. These include microscopy, histological analysis, genotyping, behavioral analysis, and nerve recording.

- The **Histology and Cellular Localization Core** (Director: Liquan Huang, Ph.D.) will provide training and research support in microscopy, anatomy and histology of chemosensory systems. Core personnel will work with Monell researchers to develop and optimize in-house procedures and to establish cutting-edge techniques in histology and cell anatomy, including anatomical and histological analysis of taste cells. Core technologies will include multilabel immunocytochemistry and in situ hybridization, along with confocal and two-photon microscopy.
- The **Genotyping and DNA/RNA Analysis Core** (Director: Danielle R. Reed, Ph.D.) will provide training and research support in genotyping and quantification of nucleic acids. These technologies enable identification of genetic variations related to taste and smell, as well as gene mapping and nucleic acid analysis. The Core will operate a NanoDrop spectrophotometer and three real-time PCR machines.

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- The **Behavioral and Physiological Phenotyping Core** (Director: Alexander A. Bachmanov, Ph.D., D.V.M.) will provide specialized services involved in the measurement of taste and feeding behavior and physiology in small mammals. Core personnel will have expertise in utilizing preference tests, gustometers, olfactometers, LabMaster and metabolic cages to analyze chemosensory and metabolic function.

“Together, the three Cores will expand Monell’s already strong scientific collaborations by bringing together diverse researchers to share similar techniques and equipment. The opportunity to expand expertise and ideas will further enrich Monell’s scientific enterprise by fostering our multidisciplinary approaches to research in the chemical senses,” said Margolskee.

The Monell Chemical Senses Center is an independent nonprofit basic research institute based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Monell advances scientific understanding of the mechanisms and functions of taste and smell to benefit human health and well-being. Using an interdisciplinary approach, scientists collaborate in the programmatic areas of sensation and perception; neuroscience and molecular biology; environmental and occupational health; nutrition and appetite; health and well-being; development, aging and regeneration; and chemical ecology and communication. For more information about Monell, visit www.monell.org.

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