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## News Release

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### **Merck Serono Commits € 1.2 million to the Grant for Fertility Innovation (GFI) for 2015 / 16**

- **Investment reflects company's ongoing commitment to innovation in Fertility research**
- **Globally, six projects receive funding from this grant cycle**

Darmstadt, Germany, June 17, 2015 – Merck Serono, the biopharmaceutical business of Merck, Germany, today announced its strong support of the Grant for Fertility Innovation (GFI) fund with grants totaling up to € 1.2 million for the years 2015 / 2016. The announcement was made during the 31<sup>st</sup> annual meeting of the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology (ESHRE) currently taking place in Lisbon.

Launched in 2009, the GFI is dedicated to transforming innovative translational fertility research projects into concrete health solutions to improve the outcomes of assisted reproductive technologies (ART). In the last six years, approximately 750 applications to GFI were received from over 50 countries around the world; from this year's applications, six projects from five countries were awarded a grant for a total of € 1.2 million.

"The GFI program fuels innovation and cutting-edge fertility research that has the potential to positively impact outcomes for couples - to further increase the success rate," said Dr. Steven Hildemann, Global Chief Medical Officer and Head of Global Medical and Drug Safety at Merck Serono. "We are excited by the growing number of high quality applications each year, reflecting significant opportunity for continued research and scientific advancement in fertility, where there is still unmet need."

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[www.merckserono.com](http://www.merckserono.com)

Merck Serono is a business of Merck.

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Every year, the GFI awardees are announced during a ceremony at ESHRE's annual meeting. This year, six winning projects were announced during the ceremony:

- **Clinical translation of a new procedure for embryo evaluation based on miRNAs profiling from spent blastocyst culture media: prospective multicenter study:** *Antonio Capalbo - Genera Reproductive Medicine centres, Rome (ITALY)*
- **Glycomarker Panel for Prediction of IVF Outcome:** *Tracey Edgell - Hudson Institute of Medical Research, Clayton (AUSTRALIA)*
- **Improved diagnostic of in-vitro-fertilization using miRNome and microvesicles from early stage embryos:** *Andreas Keller - Clinical Bioinformatics Center Saarland University, Saarbrücken (GERMANY)*
- **Embryo derived trypsin: A novel and simple marker of embryo viability:** *Nick Macklon - University of Southampton (UK)*
- **Identification of novel markers of human oocyte aging via non-invasive RNA sequencing analysis of cumulus cells:** *Pasquale Patrizio - Yale Fertility Center, New Haven (USA)*
- **Exosomes/microvesicles release as a non-invasive method to assess embryo activity:** *Paola Vigano - San Raffaele Scientific Institute, Milan (ITALY)*

For more information, please visit [www.grantforfertilityinnovation.com](http://www.grantforfertilityinnovation.com).

### About Merck Serono

Merck Serono is the biopharmaceutical business of Merck. With headquarters in Darmstadt, Germany, Merck Serono offers leading brands in 150 countries to help patients with cancer, multiple sclerosis, infertility, endocrine and metabolic disorders as well as cardiovascular diseases. In the United States and Canada, EMD Serono operates as a separately incorporated subsidiary of Merck Serono.

Merck Serono discovers, develops, manufactures and markets prescription medicines of both chemical and biological origin in specialist indications. We have an enduring commitment to deliver novel therapies in our core focus areas of neurology, oncology, immuno-oncology and immunology.

For more information, please visit [www.merckserono.com](http://www.merckserono.com)

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Merck is a leading company for innovative, top-quality high-tech products in healthcare, life science and performance materials. The company has six businesses – Merck Serono, Consumer Health, Allergopharma, Biosimilars, Merck Millipore and Performance Materials – and generated sales of around € 11.3 billion in 2014. Around 39,000 employees work for Merck in 66 countries to improve the quality of life for patients, to further the success of customers, and to help meet global challenges. Merck is the world's oldest pharmaceutical and chemical company – since 1668, the company has stood for innovation, business

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success and responsible entrepreneurship. Holding an approximately 70% interest, the founding family remains the majority owner of the company to this day. Merck, Darmstadt, Germany holds the global rights to the Merck name and brand. The only exceptions are Canada and the United States, where the company operates as EMD Serono, EMD Millipore and EMD Performance Materials