

## News Release

July 3, 2012

### **Merck Serono Increases Commitment to the Grant for Fertility Innovation (GFI) Program to 4 Million Euros**

Geneva, Switzerland, 3 July 2012 – Merck Serono, a division of Merck, Darmstadt, Germany, announced during the 28<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology (ESHRE), that the company will expand its program fund named Grant for Fertility Innovation (GFI) to €4 million for 2012/2013.

Announced for the first time in 2009, the GFI is dedicated to transforming innovative translational fertility research projects at academic centers into concrete health solutions to improve the outcomes of assisted reproductive technologies (ART). In the last three years, around 400 applications to GFI were received from over 40 countries around the world.

“We welcome Merck Serono’s commitment which contributes to fuel innovation in the field of fertility. Since the 1950s, great discoveries have been made leading to the development of treatments and the birth of millions of babies thanks to cutting edge techniques such as in vitro fertilization,” said Dr. Anna Veiga, Chairman of ESHRE. “While tremendous progress has been made over the years, research must continue to allow further advances.”

“Our GFI program has already enabled previous winners to publish important research, which may lead to new medical approaches in fertility, a key therapeutic area for Research and Development at Merck Serono,” said Dr. Annalisa Jenkins, Executive Vice President Global Development and Medical at Merck Serono. “We firmly believe that scientific collaboration that brings together researchers from across the academic

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and industry continuum will be the leading driver for the next wave of research and medical innovation.”

Every year, the GFI awardees are announced during a ceremony at ESHRE’s annual meeting. This year’s ceremony was presided by Dr. Annalisa Jenkins, joined by Timur Gürgan, Chairman of the Local Organizing Committee of ESHRE 2012, Dr. Anna Veiga, Chairman of ESHRE, and Prof. Nick Macklon, Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology, at the University of Southampton, and past GFI winner.

This year, nine winning projects were announced during the ceremony:

- **Edson Borges Jr.** (Brazil): *Non-invasive prediction of embryo implantation potential and culture media*
- **Angelika Daser** (Germany): *Direct counting of chromatids in polar bodies*
- **Ellen Greenblatt** (Canada): *Validation of endometrial receptivity biomarkers predictive of success*
- **Marcos Horton** (Argentina): *Fourier -Transform Infrared spectroscopy for metabolomics in IVF*
- **Giovanni Ruvolo** (Italy): *A new strategy in selecting oocytes with high implantation potentiality*
- **Lois A. Salamonsen** (Australia): *Uterine receptivity: the final hurdle in IVF*
- **Rossana Sapiro** (Uruguay): *Increase sperm quality by improvement of mitochondrial activity*
- **François Vialard** (France): *PIF-Biomarker of successful pregnancy*
- **Dagan Wells** (UK): *Non-invasive detection of chromosome abnormality in human oocytes*

### Notes to editors:

Photos of the award ceremony are available on the GFI website:  
[www.grantforfertilityinnovation.com](http://www.grantforfertilityinnovation.com).

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### About the Grant for Fertility Innovation (GFI)

Merck Serono announced the initiation of the GFI program in 2009 to support the advancement of science and innovative technologies in the fertility field. This grant is awarded every year to translational research projects that can potentially improve baby birth rate for the benefit of the patients. Each project is blinded and evaluated by a jury of experts according to five criteria: support to increase baby birth rate; innovative research; scientific rationale; feasibility and practical utility.

For further information about the GFI and how to apply for next year's grants, please visit:  
[www.grantforfertilityinnovation.com](http://www.grantforfertilityinnovation.com)

### About Merck Serono

Merck Serono is the biopharmaceutical division of Merck KGaA. With headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, 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 neurodegenerative diseases, oncology and rheumatology.

### About Merck

Merck is a global pharmaceutical and chemical company with total revenues of €10.3 billion in 2011, a history that began in 1668, and a future shaped by more than 40,000 employees in 67 countries. Its success is characterized by innovations from entrepreneurial employees. Merck's operating activities come under the umbrella of Merck KGaA, in which the Merck family holds an approximately 70% interest and free shareholders own the remaining approximately 30%. In 1917 the U.S. subsidiary Merck & Co. was expropriated and has been an independent company ever since.

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