

King Faisal Prize in Medicine Acceptance Speech 2021

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I am extremely delighted and deeply honored to accept this award from the King Faisal Foundation. In particular, I offer my thanks to the Foundation for creating this award, and to the Prize Selection Committee for choosing to honor our work.

This year's award is in the area of *Regenerative Medicine in Neurological Conditions*, which is a topic of immense potential and a wise choice by the King Faisal Foundation. For a broad range of central nervous system medical conditions with persistent neurological symptoms, the development of therapies to enhance neural repair is likely to revolutionize what has been a generally static and untreatable prognosis. I am excited to be a part of this field which holds such great promise for those suffering with chronic neurological deficits.

My own work to develop Nogo-Receptor-based therapy for recovery from chronic spinal cord injury has included many essential colleagues. Most critically, I wish to acknowledge the key role of more than two dozen extremely talented postdoctoral fellows and graduate students working in my laboratory at Yale University. The molecular and biological discoveries which defined the role of Nogo Receptor in limiting neural plasticity and repair could not have occurred without their devoted effort. Crucially, these investigations supported the development of therapeutics to enhance neural repair, and my colleagues at ReNetX Therapeutics worked diligently to bring these discoveries into clinical testing. My motivation to translate biological insights regarding neural plasticity into therapies derives in large part from the courageous example of the patients and friends dealing with long term impairments of spinal cord injury. All success is dedicated to alleviating their burden.

In conclusion, I reiterate my deep appreciation for this award, as well as the opportunity to visit Saudi Arabia for the first time.