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Investigating the Mechanisms of Disease
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Ed Lee, MD, PhD, Receives the 2012 ASIP Excellence in Science Award



Dr. Edward Lee has been selected as the 2012 recipient of the ASIP Excellence in Science Award, which recognizes outstanding achievement at the earliest stages of a career in biomedical research. Accomplishments include, but are not limited to, publications and presentations as well as volunteered service to the ASIP or other professional societies, institutional committees, and the pathology community. This award is funded through the generous support of the A.D. Sobel-ASIP Education Fund.

Dr. Lee received his MD, PhD from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. The thesis work he completed involved looking at the molecular and cellular mechanisms of amyloid precursor protein production and developing conformation-selective monoclonal antibodies targeting amyloid oligomers as therapeutic agents for Alzheimer's disease.

According to Dr. John Tomaszewski, former Chair at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and currently Chair of the Department of Pathology and Anatomic Sciences at Buffalo University School of Medicine, "Dr. Lee has been an outstanding example of a pathologist-scientist throughout his career, and he is a model of scientific success combined with kindhearted service to the academic community." Dr. Lee has "long been interested in aging, aging-related neurodegenerative diseases, and neuroscience." In addition, Dr. Tomaszewski states that Dr. Lee has continued on "a spectacular trajectory of research productivity and clinical prowess." Dr. Tomaszewski also quoted from Dr. Lee's clinical attendings' comments while he was in training at the University of Pennsylvania: Dr. Lee "is outstanding in every way," and "he is a wonderful trainee to work with. He is brilliant, well-organized, and caring. The neuropathology community has attracted a prize person."

Dr. Tomaszewski commends Dr. Lee for demonstrating excellence in the teaching of medical students and fellow residents, serving the academic community, serving as a section leader for several medical student classes, participating on the Membership Committee of the ASIP, and acting as co-chair for ASIP graduate student research sessions. Dr. Lee also volunteers his time for the University of Pennsylvania's Bioethics in Research course, gives lectures to staff in Neurology, Radiology, and Neurosurgery, and he generated a comprehensive Surgical Pathology manual to aid residents and fellows. "In short," states Dr. Tomaszewski, Dr. Lee "is one of the stars of the program."

According to Dr. John Trojanowski of University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Lee transitioned into his laboratory wanting to pursue "multiple projects related to neurodegenerative diseases" including studying the effects of TDP-43 protein expression on neuronal viability and gene expression in novel transgenic mice (TDP-43 is a protein found in intraneuronal and intragial aggregates that play a key role in the pathogenesis of ALS and FTD), working on two completely different disease proteins, and branching out into endocrinology and metabolism research to study the role of obesity on AD. Dr. Trojanowski comments that Dr. Lee is "indefatigable in his voracious drive for science," and that "the pace of his research is accelerating."

Dr. Nicholas Gonatas of the University of Pennsylvania says that Dr. Lee is “among the top trainees within (a) prestigious group of individuals and” he is “confident that (Dr. Lee) will prove to be a leader in our field. Indeed, his publication record already tops 20 papers from highly respected journals.” Dr. Gonatas looks forward to witnessing Dr. Lee’s continued success in science, stating that “his excitement for science” is “often infectious, and his intellectual curiosity is only matched by his hard work and diligence.”

Dr. Lee presented his award lecture, “Mechanisms of TDP-43 Mediated Neurodegeneration in ALS and FTL D” on Saturday, April 21, 2012 at the ASIP Annual Meeting at Experimental Biology 2012 in San Diego, CA. He received the Excellence in Science Award on Monday, April 23, 2012 during the ASIP Awards Presentation and Membership Business Meeting.