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## News Release

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### Merck Serono Announces Recipients of the Third Annual €1 Million Grant for Multiple Sclerosis Innovation

- **Four research grants awarded out of 146 applications, highlighting continuing commitment to multiple sclerosis**

Darmstadt, Germany, October 8, 2015 – Merck Serono, the biopharmaceutical business of Merck, today announced the recipients of the third annual Grant for Multiple Sclerosis Innovation (GMSI) at the 31<sup>st</sup> Congress of the European Committee for Treatment and Research in Multiple Sclerosis (ECTRIMS) being held in Barcelona, Spain.

Four recipients, from The Netherlands, Finland, Italy, and the UK, will share the overall €1 million grant to support their research:

- *Dynamics of M1/M2 polarization of microglia in multiple sclerosis: a PET imaging study:* Helga E de Vries, Professor in Neuro-immunology, MS Centre Amsterdam, Dept. Molecular Cell Biology and immunology, VU University Medical Center, The Netherlands.
- *Role of microglia in the pathogenesis of progressive multiple sclerosis:* Laura Airas, Associate Professor, University of Turku, Finland.
- *Driving microglia metabolism toward remyelination and restoration of brain damage in multiple sclerosis:* Claudia Verderio, Senior Researcher, National Research Council, Institute of Neuroscience, Italy.
- *Molecular markers of multiple sclerosis disease progression:* Gabriele De Luca, Associate Professor of Clinical Neurology, Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences, University of Oxford, UK.

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The GMSI was launched in October 2012 with the aim of improving the understanding of MS for the ultimate benefit of those living with the disease. This year researchers from across the globe were invited to submit proposals describing promising translational research projects, resulting in 146 proposals.

"At Merck Serono, our long-term commitment to MS patients is evident in our medical research and development programs. The Grant for Multiple Sclerosis Innovation is another manifestation of our commitment and the interest in advancing the science behind MS is clear from the number of proposals this year," says Steven Hildemann, Chief Medical Officer, and head of Global Medical Affairs and Global Drug Safety at Merck Serono. "I am impressed by the breadth, depth, and quality of the proposals, and it is further confirmation that there continues to be a deep interest within the scientific community to gain further understanding of the disease."

The call for proposals, for the 2016 GMSI was made by Merck Serono at today's GMSI Award Ceremony. The awards ceremony was chaired by David Bates, Emeritus Professor of Clinical Neurology at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, and a member of the GMSI Scientific Committee. More information about the GMSI can be found at the following website: [www.grantformultiplesclerosisinnovation.org](http://www.grantformultiplesclerosisinnovation.org)

### **About multiple sclerosis**

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a chronic, inflammatory condition of the central nervous system and is the most common, non-traumatic, disabling neurological disease in young adults. It is estimated that approximately two million patients have MS worldwide. While symptoms can vary, the most common symptoms of MS include blurred vision, numbness or tingling in the limbs and problems with strength and coordination. The relapsing forms of MS are the most common.

### **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,

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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 and 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 Merck employees work in 66 countries to improve the quality of life for patients, to foster 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 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.