

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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EMBARGOED UNTIL 11 A.M. CST WEDNESDAY, NOV. 20, 2002

UT SOUTHWESTERN POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHER WINS INTERNATIONAL YOUNG SCIENTIST PRIZE

DALLAS – Nov. 20, 2002 – Research about the circadian clock, which regulates the body's activities on a 24-hour cycle, has earned Dr. Jared Rutter the Young Scientist Prize for 2002, a prestigious worldwide recognition presented by *Science* magazine and Amersham Biosciences.

The Young Scientist Prize, established in 1995, is the highest recognition awarded worldwide to a single molecular biology scientist early in his or her career. In addition to the \$25,000 grand prize, six researchers from four geographic regions – North America, Europe, Japan and all other countries – will receive \$5,000 awards.

Rutter is a postdoctoral biochemistry researcher at UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas. The international prize brings added recognition for a gifted, 29-year-old researcher who already has a list of accomplishments to his credit.

Rutter's winning essay on proteins containing a "sensing" module that is involved in regulating the body's clock appears in the Nov. 22 issue of *Science*.

"As a scientist and researcher, I was impressed with Jared Rutter's study of the circadian rhythms. In fact, all of the winning entries this year really make a researcher, no matter the years of experience, sit back and think," said Andrew Carr, president of Amersham Biosciences. "This prize is dedicated to recognizing the up-and-coming researchers behind the future of molecular science, and this year's winner will clearly have an impact."

Rutter is quick to credit the cooperative efforts of researchers in the laboratory of Dr. Steven McKnight, chairman of biochemistry at UT Southwestern, as playing a big role in his success.

"A lot of my accomplishments are the result of collaboration with other researchers in Dr. McKnight's lab. This was essential to getting the work done," he said. "One of the biggest reasons for my success is the environment of UT Southwestern. It is the main reason I wanted to stay here as a postdoctoral fellow."

(MORE)

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McKnight is just as complimentary of the young researcher's efforts.

"Jared really is something special," said McKnight. "This is wonderful recognition for him and a reflection of our department's success. It's great to see awards going to the people who truly do the work and who have so much promise. Other students and postdoctoral fellows from around the world are certain to notice this award, thus providing further confirmation that UT Southwestern is delivering the goods when it comes to science."

Science Editor-in-Chief Donald Kennedy said Rutter's research shed light on how organisms respond to changes in their environment. In humans, changes in the circadian cycle have been associated with sleep disorders and depression.

"Biological rhythms and their underlying mechanisms have become an exciting domain in neuroscience and cell biology," said Kennedy. "Rutter's work has provided an important new insight that will enhance the excitement."

Rutter and McKnight also are among the authors of a study published Nov. 21 in *Science Express* that deals with neuronal PAS domain protein 2 (NPAS2), a mammalian transcription factor implicated in the regulation of circadian rhythm. Their new study, performed collaboratively with the laboratory of Dr. Marie-Alda Gilles-Gonzalez, associate professor of biochemistry at UT Southwestern, provides evidence that the NPAS2 transcription factor is directly regulated by carbon monoxide gas.

Rutter received his doctorate in cell and molecular biology in 2001 from UT Southwestern and won the Nominata Award for most outstanding graduate student – the Southwestern Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences' highest honor – for his research on a protein that regulates energy in cells.

The protein, PAS kinase, has many of the same effects on individual cells as insulin has throughout the body, including controlling the conversion of carbohydrates into energy. By studying PAS kinase, Rutter hopes to understand how a cell prepares to respond to insulin.

Science is a peer-reviewed weekly journal published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the world's largest general scientific organization. Amersham Biosciences develops and provides systems that are used to uncover the function of genes and proteins, to discover and develop drugs, and to manufacture biopharmaceuticals.

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