UT SOUTHWESTERN MEDICAL CENTER NEWS

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UT Southwestern's Parada wins award for neurofibromatosis research

DALLAS – July 6, 2009 – Dr. Luis Parada, chairman of developmental biology at UT Southwestern Medical Center, has received the 2009 Friedrich von Recklinghausen award from the Children's Tumor Foundation.

The award recognizes Dr. Parada's decades of research on neurofibromatosis, a set of genetic disorders in which tumors form along nerves. The award was presented in Portland, Ore., at the foundation's annual conference.

"It is always humbling to receive recognition from your peers," said Dr. Parada, who directs the Kent Waldrep Center for Basic Research on Nerve Growth and Regeneration. "This award reflects many years of work and many laboratory members and collaborators. Studying neurofibromatosis has been one of the most rewarding endeavors of my career because it has opened so many scientific portals but also because we have had the opportunity to impact the quality of patients' lives."

Dr. Kim Hunter-Schaedle, chief scientific officer of the Children's Tumor Foundation, said, "Dr. Parada has made groundbreaking achievements in many areas of research ranging from tuberous sclerosis to autism, but his contributions to neurofibromatosis have been truly significant."

Among his accomplishments are his early work on the interaction of a cancer-related gene with NF1, the most common neurofibromatosis and his recent development of a genetically engineered mouse model for NF1-related skin tumors.

About 100,000 people in the United States suffer from one of the three neurofibromatosis disorders, which are more prevalent than cystic fibrosis, hereditary muscular dystrophy, Huntington's disease and Tay-Sachs disease combined, according to the Children's Tumor Foundation.

Complications include blindness; deafness; skeletal abnormalities; dermal, brain and

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spinal tumors; loss of limbs, malignancies and learning disabilities.

The most common type of the disease, NF1, was originally called von Recklinghausen's disease after the pathologist who first documented it.

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