

UCSD Cardiologist Receives NIH New Innovator Award

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The National Institutes of Health has chosen Neil Chi, MD, PhD, assistant professor of medicine in the division of cardiology at the University of California, San Diego, as one of its 2010 NIH Director's New Innovator Award recipients.

With this \$2.3 million award, Chi and his team will study the remarkable ability of the zebrafish to regenerate the heart. The team has created a collection of tools which will help in understanding the underlying mechanisms of cardiac regeneration. "Heart failure is the leading cause of death in the United States," said Dr. Chi. "We hope to someday apply what we learn from the zebrafish heart regeneration process towards understanding how to directly reprogram human cells into ventricular cardiomyocytes for the regeneration of injured hearts from patients afflicted with heart attacks and/or heart failure."

Chi is one of 52 New Innovator honorees nationwide, including 13 researchers from within the University of California. "NIH is pleased to be supporting early-stage investigators from across the country who are taking considered risks in a wide range of areas in order to accelerate research," said Francis S. Collins, MD, PhD, director of the National Institutes of Health. "We look forward to the results of their work."

Established in 2007, the NIH Director's New Innovator Award funds new investigators who propose highly innovative research projects that could have an exceptionally great impact on biomedical or behavioral science. The award program is designed to support unusually creative new investigators with highly innovative research ideas at an early stage of their career.

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