

UC San Diego Researcher Michael Karin Elected to Institute of Medicine

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Michael Karin, PhD, Distinguished Professor of Pharmacology in the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine, has been named to the prestigious Institute of Medicine (IOM), joining 64 other new members and five foreign associates elected this month.

Election to the IOM is considered one of the highest honors in the fields of health and medicine. "Each of these new members stands out as a professional whose research, knowledge and skills have significantly advanced health and medicine. Their achievements are an inspiration," said IOM president Harvey V. Fineberg.



Michael Karin, PhD

Karin, who heads UC San Diego's Laboratory of Gene Regulation and Signal Transduction, has long been interested in how cells and biological systems function at the molecular level in both

healthy and stressed or diseased states. He is a renowned expert on the interaction of mammalian cells with their environment and, specifically, the role of inflammation in cancer, heart disease, diabetes and other chronic diseases. His research has broad, practical implications and applications, notably in issues like obesity and cancer.

He is widely published. Recent papers have included identifying why saturated and unsaturated fatty acids produce diametrically opposed health effects; how a regulatory T cell, whose job is to help mediate the body's immune response, appears to hasten and intensify the spread of breast cancer; and the existence of a backup mechanism when the body's innate immune system fails.

The IOM was established in 1970 as part of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), a private, non-profit society of distinguished scholars that serves as an advisory board to the nation's leaders on scientific and technological issues. Karin was elected to the NAS in 2005. The IOM provides independent, scientifically informed analysis and recommendations on health issues.

New IOM members are elected by current active IOM members through a highly selective process that highlights individuals who have made major contributions to the advancement of medical sciences, health care and public health. With the election of Karin and the others, whose areas of accomplishment range from epidemiology and psychiatry to health economics and biomedical engineering, the IOM's total active membership rises to 1,688 members.

Karin has received numerous awards and honors, including the Harvey Prize in human health, the Oppenheimer Award for Excellence in Research from the Endocrine Society, the Herman Beerman Lectureship from the Society of Investigative Dermatology, C.E.R.I.E.S. Research Award for Physiology or Biology of the Skin, the Grossman Lectureship from the American Gastroenterology Association and an American Cancer Society Research Professorship.

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