

CROSS-INDUSTRY ORGANIZATIONS

The DDL Conference: Supporting young scientists and recognizing achievement since 1989

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On behalf of DDL and the Aerosol Society

The Drug Delivery to the Lungs Conference, or DDL as it is commonly known, strives to promote the work of young scientists and early career researchers through free registration to the annual DDL Conference and a series of awards and grants.

The Pat Burnell Young Investigator Award

An accolade named after one of the founders of the DDL Conference, the Pat Burnell Young Investigator Award, was established in 2010. The award recognizes Pat's vision that DDL encourage young researchers to showcase their work. Finalists for the prestigious award are given the opportunity to present and be judged on both an oral lecture and their scientific poster submission. In addition, the winner receives £500.00 in prize funds.

Past winners include Professor Regina Scherließ (the 2010 winner) who since September 2017 has been a professor of Pharmaceuticals and Biopharmaceutics at Kiel University, where she is also Chair of the department. In addition, she is a valued member of the DDL Conference Scientific Committee. In 2014, Abinhav Kumar won the award and went on to work at Deloitte as a Senior Consultant and as a Research Collaborator at Inhalation Sciences in Sweden. He is now Head of Chemistry Solutions (Life Sciences—Reaxys) at Elsevier. Martin Rowland won the award in 2012 and is now working at Pfizer

in Germany on tech transfer and scale-up of oral dosage forms.

Last year Jesse Xu (University of Sydney and the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research), received the award for his presentation, "Incorporating chemotherapeutic drugs into customised airway stents for local treatment of central airway obstructions."

The Pat Burnell Award presents a unique opportunity for young scientists to take their first steps in presenting, managing question-and-answer sessions and networking with peers and experts in inhalation science.

The Emerging Scientist Award

While the Pat Burnell Award focuses on those working toward a degree or within three years of completing a degree, the Emerging Scientist Award offers an opportunity for early career scientists who are within 15 years since completing their PhD or equivalent qualification.

This award is open to all international scientists who have demonstrated, through public work, significant scientific accomplishment or innovation in inhalation science. The winner is announced on stage during the DDL conference then presents a lecture and receives an honorary award and £1,000.00.

In 2017, Francesca Buttini from the University of Parma, became the first winner of this award, delivering the inaugural lecture

titled, "Engineered microparticles for DPI construction and powder administration strategy." Following in Francesca's steps was Josué Sznitman of Technion, Israel Institute of Technology. He won the award in 2018, presenting his work on "Bioengineering strategies for targeted therapeutic delivery to the lungs." Last year Qi (Tony) Zhou of Purdue University received the award, delivering his work on "Formulation, characterization and drug delivery of dry powder inhalers."

The New Researcher Network

"We are greater than the sum of our parts," a quotation by author John Green, may be highly relevant to PhD students and early career scientists. The beginning of a journey as a scientist is not always colors and rainbows. All early career researchers need support from both within and outside of their institutions, which is the reason the New Researcher Network (NRN) was created.

The NRN was founded by the three authors of this article. All of us are at various stages of our own research journeys: Snezana Radivojev (RCPE GmbH) is in the middle of her PhD studies, Marie Hellfritzsich (Kiel University) is already at the finish line and Dr. Magda Swedrowska is moving along the postdoc road.

As participants in a variety of conferences, we know how difficult it is to network, meet other academics and forge new collab-

orations as an early career scientist. We therefore wanted to create a community in which new researchers could feel free to conduct open discussions surrounding research ideas, obstacles, joint projects and exchanges.

The idea was welcomed and supported by the DDL committee. With their help, we had a successful initial meeting at DDL2019 and will therefore continue to provide support for present and future scientists. These will include discussion forums during the virtual DDL2020 event and we are confident that a small workshop during the summer months of 2021 will also be possible. That workshop will focus on current trends in the inhalation industry, identification of “hot topics” and things that industry would like to see from scientists in the future.

Career Development Grant

This flexible grant is intended to support new and emerging scientists by funding projects that contribute to a scientist’s career development. The grant can support individuals from public, private and university organizations. Upon completion of projects, recipients are asked to present their work at a future DDL Conference.

Looking ahead to DDL2021

Following the DDL2020 Christmas Lectures, we will begin focusing on our return to the Edinburgh International Conference Centre in December 2021. Students will be welcome to attend the face-to-face conference in 2021 free of charge, providing the next generation of aerosol and drug delivery researchers with the excellent opportunity to engage with world-renowned scientists, promote their own work and gain experience attending a large and prestigious conference. We cannot wait to welcome everyone back!

For information about the New Researcher Network, contact network@ddl-conference.com.

For more information on the Aerosol Society and its activities, visit www.aerosol-soc.com.