

NIH lab receives Chan Zuckerberg Initiative award for ALS/FTD research

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Lab will team up with researchers in Germany to study the role of aging in a genetic form of ALS/FTD

The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative (CZI) **[has announced](#)** that a lab led by **[Michael E. Ward, M.D., Ph.D., investigator](#)** at the NIH's National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke is part of one of 30 pairs of researchers to receive an award from CZI's **[Neurodegeneration Challenge Network](#)** (NDCN). The NDCN is "an interdisciplinary collaborative initiative which brings together experimental scientists from diverse research fields to understand the fundamental biology of neurodegenerative disorders," such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.

[Dr. Ward's lab](#) combines induced pluripotent stem cell technology and advanced molecular and genetic analysis techniques to study how cells from patients with inherited forms of dementia and other neurodegenerative disorders die and rewire the brain. For this project, his lab will work with researchers in the lab of **[Alessandro Ori, Ph.D., at the Leibniz Institute on Aging - Fritz Lipmann Institute](#)**, in Jena, Germany. Dr. Ori's team uses fish, called killifish, that have very short lifespans to study the molecular mechanisms of brain aging. Together the labs will explore the role that aging plays in the neural damage caused by mutations in the gene TARDBP/TDP-43, which has been linked to some cases of frontotemporal dementia (FTD) and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). Initially, each lab will receive \$75,000 of first phase seed funding for 18 months. If successful, the team may be eligible to apply for second phase funding of \$1.6 million over four years.

For more information:

[National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke](#)

[Intramural Research Program \(IRP\)](#)

[Neuroscience @ NIH](#)

[Division of Intramural Research](#)

[Frontotemporal Dementia Information Page](#)

[Hope Through Research: Frontotemporal Disorders](#)

[Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis \(ALS\) Information Page](#)

[Hope Through Research: Dementia](#)

[Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis \(ALS\) Fact Sheet](#)

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[NINDS](#) is the nation's leading funder of research on the brain and nervous system. The mission of NINDS is to seek fundamental knowledge about the brain and nervous system and to use that knowledge to reduce the burden of neurological disease.

[About the National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)](#): NIH, the nation's medical research agency, includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIH is the primary federal agency conducting and supporting basic, clinical, and translational medical research, and is investigating the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit **<https://www.nih.gov>**.

Michael E. Ward, M.D., Ph.D., investigator, NINDS

Dr. Ward's lab was one of 30 pairs of researchers to receive an award from the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative's Neurodegeneration Challenge Network. Working with the lab of Alessandro Ori, Ph.D., at the Leibniz Institute on Aging – Fritz Lipman Institute, Jena,



Germany, his lab will study how aging contributes to the neural damage seen in some cases of ALS/FTD. *Courtesy of Ward lab, NIH/NINDS.*