



Canadian Allergy, Asthma and Immunology Foundation (CAAIF)
Fondation canadienne d'allergie, d'asthme et d'immunologie (FCAAI)



THE CANADIAN SOCIETY
OF ALLERGY AND
CLINICAL IMMUNOLOGY



\$250,000 Fellowship award advances Canadian food allergy research

Hamilton, ON (12 December 2019)

The Canadian Allergy, Asthma and Immunology Foundation (CAAIF), the Canadian Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (CSACI), and AllerGen NCE Inc. are pleased to announce that **Dr. Derek Chu** has been awarded the prestigious *CAAIF-CSACI-AllerGen Emerging Clinician-Scientist Research Fellowship*.

Valued at \$250,000, this award enables a newly trained Canadian allergist and immunologist to pursue advanced research and establish a combined career as a clinician and an academic researcher.

Dr. Chu will begin his two-year Fellowship in December 2019 at McMaster University where he will train under the supervision and mentorship of food allergy investigators Drs Manel Jordana and Susan Wasserman.

“Clinician-scientists are uniquely positioned to translate research knowledge into improved patient care and health,” comments Dr. Wasserman, an allergist and Director of the Division of Clinical Immunology and Allergy at McMaster University. “Dr. Chu’s research, which will study the mechanisms of peanut allergy, has tremendous potential to have an impact on patients and we are confident that his work will benefit the millions of Canadians affected by food allergies.”

Using analytical platforms developed in the Jordana lab at McMaster, Dr. Chu’s research will translate recent discoveries in peanut allergy from mice to humans by embedding immunological experimentation within two key AllerGen-funded clinical studies.

The first study will evaluate the efficacy and safety of peanut oral immunotherapy (OIT), a medical treatment that exposes allergic patients to minute doses of an allergenic food with the goal of desensitizing the immune system. In parallel, Dr. Chu will investigate the role of IgE⁺ memory B cells (MBCs) throughout and after OIT to understand their role and impact on OIT efficacy. The second study will investigate the “threshold dose” of peanut required to trigger an allergic reaction, as well as the mechanism of IgE⁺ memory reactivation involved with long-term food allergy.

“Allergic and immune-related diseases have increased over the past 20 years, especially among children,” notes Dr. Harold Kim, President of the CSACI. “Novel, patient-oriented diagnostic and treatment protocols are urgently needed, and the CSACI is delighted to co-fund this Fellowship that will enhance patient care by supporting excellence in basic and translational research.”

Dr. Chu completed an Internal Medicine residency, a specialty in clinical immunology and allergy, and a PhD at McMaster University.

“I am honoured to receive the *CAAIF-CSACI-AllerGen Emerging Clinician-Scientist Fellowship*,” he says. “This award will provide invaluable experience on my path towards becoming an independent clinician-scientist committed to improving the lives of patients with food allergy. I am extremely grateful for the support of my mentors, local and international collaborators, and McMaster University, as well as CAAIF, CSACI and AllerGen.”

“This is the fifth *Emerging Clinician-Scientist Fellowship* granted since AllerGen founded the award in 2011,” says Dr. Diana Royce, AllerGen’s President and CEO. “The AllerGen network, our partners and communities look forward to the results of Dr. Chu’s research, and we are confident that this Fellowship will lead to novel, breakthrough discoveries in food allergy and related fields.”

About CAAIF:

The [Canadian Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology Foundation \(CAAIF\)](#) is a non-profit organization founded in 1995, to improve the quality of lives of Canadians by supporting allergy, asthma and clinical immunology research. Each year, CAAIF awards grants, and fellowships to leading Canadian researchers pursuing asthma, food allergy and related immune-related disease research with potential to improve the health of Canadians.

About CSACI:

The goals of the [Canadian Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology \(CSACI\)](#), a specialty society founded in 1945, are to: improve the standards of teaching and practice of allergy and clinical immunology; foster co-operation between those engaged in the study and practice of allergy and clinical immunology; encourage research in the field of allergy and clinical immunology; and promote harmony and understanding between physicians engaged in the practice of allergy and clinical immunology and others of the medical profession.

About AllerGen NCE Inc.

[AllerGen NCE Inc.](#), the Allergy, Genes and Environment Network, is a national research network dedicated to improving the quality of life of people living with allergic and related immune diseases. Funded through the federal Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE) Program, the Network is hosted at McMaster University in Hamilton.

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