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Natalia Gomez-Ospina, MD, PhD is the Recipient of the 2024 Dr. Michael S. Watson Genetic and Genomic Medicine Innovation Award from the ACMG Foundation for Genetic and Genomic Medicine

BETHESDA, MD – March 13, 2024 | Natalia Gomez-Ospina, MD, PhD is the recipient of the ACMG Foundation for Genetic and Genomic Medicine’s **2024 Dr. Michael S. Watson Genetic and Genomic Medicine Innovation Award**—the “Watson Award”—named for the American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics first and longstanding executive director, Michael S. Watson, MS, PhD, FACMG.

“I am honored to receive this award in recognition of my dedication to advancing genetic and genomic medicine and my commitment to making a positive difference in the lives of patients with genetic diseases. This award affirms the need for innovative approaches to treat such diseases and the immense potential that genome editing has in this regard. This award also motivates me to push boundaries and share these innovations with a broader audience in order to inspire others to contribute to advancing therapeutic genome editing,” Dr. Gomez-Ospina said.

Dr. Gomez-Ospina is a board-certified medical geneticist and Assistant Professor at Stanford University. As a physician-scientist, she brings passion and expertise to the clinic and the laboratory to diagnose and treat genetic diseases, particularly lysosomal storage disorders. At Lucile Packard Children's Hospital, she leads the enzyme replacement service and Stanford's Program for Inherited Metabolic Disorders, where she works to advance gene and cell-based therapies for genetic diseases. One of Dr. Gomez-Ospina's main scientific contributions is commandeering the hematopoietic system to express proteins needed in other organs, including the brain. Her groundbreaking work includes an adaptable platform for treating enzyme deficiencies and pioneering a first-of-its-kind preclinical study for autologous transplantation of genome-edited cells to treat patients with Mucopolysaccharidosis type I (Hurler syndrome) and Gaucher disease. Beyond this, her platform holds tremendous promise for delivering various therapeutic proteins to the brain and other organs.

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Despite her relatively young career, Dr. Gomez-Ospina has made significant contributions, with lead authorship in prestigious journals such as the *New England Journal of Medicine*, *Cell*, *Nature Communications*, and the *American Journal of Medical Genetics*. Her exceptional achievements have not gone unnoticed, as she has received several prestigious awards, including the Outstanding Young Investigator Award from the American Society for Cell and Gene Therapy, the Young Scientist Award from the American Society for Clinical Investigation, the Young Investigator Award from the Western Society for Pediatric Research, and the prestigious William K. Bowes Jr. Award in Medical Genetics from Partners HealthCare Personalized Medicine.

“Dr. Gomez-Espina is a promising physician-scientist whose work is befitting the Dr. Michael Watson Genetic and Genomic Medicine Innovation Award, an award that honors an individual whose work has had a significant impact on genetic and genomic medicine. Dr Gomez-Espina's work is innovative, collaborative, and novel, recognizing several newfound genetic conditions. Her research focuses on advancing cell-based therapies for genetic disorders, investigating genome editing to engineer hematopoietic stem cells for the treatment of lysosomal storage diseases,” said Nancy J. Mendelsohn, MD, FACMG, president of the ACMG Foundation.

About the ACMG Foundation for Genetic and Genomic Medicine

Founded in 1991, the American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics (ACMG) is a prominent authority in the field of medical genetics and genomics and the only nationally recognized medical professional organization solely dedicated to improving health through the practice of medical genetics and genomics. The only medical specialty society in the US that represents the full spectrum of medical genetics disciplines in a single organization, the ACMG provides education, resources and a voice for more than 2,500 clinical and laboratory geneticists, genetic counselors and other healthcare professionals. ACMG’s mission is to improve health through the clinical and laboratory practice of medical genetics as well as through advocacy, education and clinical research, and to guide the safe and effective integration of genetics and genomics into all of medicine and healthcare, resulting in improved personal and public health. *Genetics in Medicine* and the new *Genetics in Medicine Open*, a gold open access journal, are the official ACMG journals. ACMG’s website, www.acmg.net, offers resources including policy statements, practice guidelines, and educational programs. The ACMG Foundation for Genetic and Genomic Medicine works to advance ACMG educational and public health programs through charitable gifts from corporations, foundations and individuals.

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