UCLA Researcher Receives CIRM Research Leadership Award

- Dr. John Chute of UCLA’s Broad Stem Cell Research Center and Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center awarded Research Leadership grant from CIRM.
- Dr. Chute recently joined UCLA from Duke University.
- His research focuses on growth of blood stem cells.
- Dr. Chute is the only clinician scientist to receive this award.

Dr. John Chute, member of UCLA’s Eli and Edythe Broad Center of Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research and Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center has been awarded a Research Leadership Award of $5.1 million from the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine (CIRM), the state’s stem cell agency. Announcement of the award came at the meeting of the CIRM Independent Citizens’ Oversight Committee (ICOC), the governing board of the agency, in La Jolla, CA on May 29, 2014. Dr. Chute is the only clinician scientist to receive a CIRM Leadership Award.

The CIRM Leadership Award is intended to bolster California’s efforts in stem cell research and further its mission to advance novel treatments and cures into medical practice. As a clinician-scientist focused on the creation of cell therapies, Dr. Chute, a professor of hematology-oncology in the department of medicine and the department of radiation oncology, brings the unique capability of translating scientific discoveries directly to the treatment of patients. Dr. Chute came to UCLA earlier this year from Duke University in North Carolina.

Dr. Chute’s groundbreaking research focuses on the study of hematopoietic stem cells (HSC, the cells that become blood cells) and how they grow. Specifically, he and his colleagues are defining the mechanisms through which the bone marrow microenvironment cells regulate HSC self-renewal, repair and regeneration. Among his multiple discoveries are two novel proteins that are essential to the growth of blood cells.

With this knowledge, Dr. Chute and his team can also understand how leukemia stem cells use the same mechanisms in their growth, and target those growth factors with cellular therapies.

“We’ve shown that our approach of creating genetic mouse models to find proteins that regulate HSC growth works,” Dr. Chute said. “We are now poised to translate some of these into phase I clinical trials. Thus, there is strong translational value in our work and it is a validated discovery program for understanding how the microenvironment cells regulate HSC in the body.”

The Research Leadership Awards enabled universities and research institutions to attract the best, non-California stem cell scientists who have established themselves as independent investigators and emerging leaders in the field. The award allows recipients to pursue high-risk, high-payoff research that could not be adequately supported by other sources. Awards have a five-year funding period and each eligible California institution is allowed only one recipient, emphasizing its rarity and importance.
About the Eli and Edythe Broad Center of Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research

The stem cell center was launched in 2005 with a UCLA commitment of $20 million over five years. A $20 million gift from the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation in 2007 resulted in the renaming of the center. With more than 200 members, the Eli and Edythe Broad Center of Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research is committed to a multi-disciplinary, integrated collaboration of scientific, academic and medical disciplines for the purpose of understanding adult and human embryonic stem cells. The center supports innovation, excellence and the highest ethical standards focused on stem cell research with the intent of facilitating basic scientific inquiry directed towards future clinical applications to treat disease. The center is a collaboration of the David Geffen School of Medicine, UCLA’s Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center, the Henry Samueli School of Engineering and Applied Science and the UCLA College of Letters and Science. To learn more about the center, visit our web site at [http://www.stemcell.ucla.edu](http://www.stemcell.ucla.edu).