

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **LJI and Kyowa Kirin launch immunology fellowship program**

*New Michael Croft Fellowship in Immunology Fund to provide vital support for early career scientists*

LA JOLLA, CA—Support for early career researchers is about to get a major boost, thanks to a new fellowship fund established by leaders at La Jolla Institute for Immunology (LJI) and Japan-based global pharmaceutical corporation, [Kyowa Kirin, Inc.](#)

The fellowship fund has been named in honor of LJI Professor Michael Croft, Ph.D., who has worked closely with Kyowa Kirin scientists through the years. The new Michael Croft Fellowship in Immunology Fund recognizes Croft's commitment to training and mentoring the next generation of immunologists. Kyowa Kirin will provide \$65,000 to the fund each year, over the next five years.

"LJI and Kyowa Kirin have benefitted from a strong partnership for more than three decades," says LJI President and CEO Erica Ollmann Saphire, Ph.D. "We are grateful to have Kyowa Kirin's support in bringing talented researchers to train at the Institute among research leaders such as Michael Croft. These researchers will go on to make important scientific discoveries and advance our understanding of human health."

The fund's first fellowship will go to LJI Postdoctoral Researcher Rinkesh Gupta, Ph.D., who leads investigations in the Croft Lab to shed light on diseases such as asthma, psoriasis, and atopic dermatitis.

"This fellowship means a lot to me as a researcher," says Gupta. "It will not only motivate me but also support my scientific career and further my research in the Croft Lab."

Gupta studies what he calls the immune system's "mistakes." These are cases where the body's immune cells react to the wrong targets. Allergies and allergic asthma, for example, happen when immune cells overreact to environmental triggers, and autoimmune diseases happen when confused immune cells target the body's own tissues. "In autoimmune disease, your cells are treated as invaders in your own body," Gupta explains.

His goal is to identify targets on these wayward immune cells and examine how therapeutics might one day limit the development and severity of autoimmune and allergic diseases. "Receiving this support from Kyowa Kirin and LJI gives me the encouragement to keep me on the path that I'm on," says Gupta.

Read more: [La Jolla Institute renews longtime collaboration with Kyowa Kirin, Inc.](#)