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GLAUCOMA TEAM AWARDED MORE THAN $3.3 MILLION FOR RESEARCH

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Dr. Andras Komáromy, associate professor of Comparative Ophthalmology, and his research team within the Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences, have been awarded two major grants for their research on glaucoma.

The National Eye Institute (NEI)/ National Institutes of Health (NIH) awarded Komáromy, and his partners at MSU, the University of Florida and the University of Michigan, a five-year grant totaling $3.2 million to develop a novel gene therapy for long-term eye pressure control in glaucomas, a group of progressive optic neuropathies that together are leading causes of irreversible vision loss in both human and dogs.

Additionally, the BrightFocus Foundation awarded Komáromy and his collaborators at Harvard Medical School $150,000 over 2 years to study another new treatment for glaucoma. The goal of this innovative gene therapy approach is to protect the optic nerve from degenerating in the presence of elevated eye pressure, a main risk factor of glaucoma.

“Our work has been recognized as being relevant for the development of novel glaucoma therapies for both humans and dogs,” Komáromy says. “Being funded by both BrightFocus Foundation and NIH is very special for us.”

Komáromy earned his veterinary degree from the University of Zurich in Switzerland, completed an internship in small animal medicine and surgery at MSU, and completed a residency in veterinary ophthalmology and his PhD at the University of Florida. He is a Diplomate of the American and the European Colleges of Veterinary Ophthalmologists. He is a board member of the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists and its Vision for Animals Foundation.

Komáromy joined the MSU faculty in 2012 where he currently heads the Comparative Ophthalmology Service and its residency program at the Veterinary Medical Center, and where he sees animal patients with eye diseases. Previously he was at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, where he led the development of a new gene therapy to treat achromatopsia or total color blindness in dogs. The treatment restored cone photoreceptor function and is currently in clinical trials for human patients.

Komáromy’s research efforts in ocular gene therapy have been recognized in recent years through several awards, such as the Shaffer Prize for Innovative Science (Glaucoma Research Foundation) and the Carl Camras Translational Research Award (Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology Foundation and Pfizer Ophthalmics). He is also the 2016 recipient of the MSU Zoetis Award for Veterinary Research Excellence. Additionally, Komáromy has been invited earlier this year to speak to the American Glaucoma Society, a leading group of physician glaucoma specialists. He was one of the first veterinarians to do so, which is “another honor and recognition of our research efforts,” he says.

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