The American Academy of Periodontology (AAP) is pleased to announce that member Yvonne Kapila, DDS, PhD, is the first recipient of its new SUNSTAR Innovation Grant (SIG). The $30,000 research grant, a component of the AAP’s recent partnership with oral health and technology company SUNSTAR, provides support to an AAP member whose research endeavors show significant potential to advance the science and practice of periodontics.

Kapila’s research project, “Natural Bacteriocins as Pre/Pro-Biotics to Promote Oral Health and Prevent Periodontal Disease,” was selected out of 15 grant submissions. This project aims to build a foundation for using pre- or pro-biotics containing nisin (commonly used as a food preservative) or nisin-secreting bacteria to promote the maintenance of a healthy oral microbiome and to prevent the formation of pathogenic biofilms associated with periodontal disease.

“The SUNSTAR Innovation Grant will allow our team of clinicians and scientists to explore nisin’s effects on oral biofilm composition using both in vitro and in vivo model systems. Nisin has a long history of safety and broad range of biomedical applications, and it could add value in our understanding of periodontal health and periodontal disease prevention,” said Kapila, professor and vice chair of the University of California, San Francisco, division of periodontology. “I am so pleased and honored that this important project was chosen by the AAP and SUNSTAR to receive additional funding.”

Initiated one year ago as a pilot project, the Greater Washington D.C. Academy of Osseointegration Study Club (GWDCAOSC) is celebrating its success of becoming a model AO program to facilitate local collaboration, education and networking.

Held on April 20, the study club’s recent one-year anniversary meeting included a presentation by Steven Guttenberg, DDS, MD, an oral and maxillofacial surgeon. Guttenberg was the first clinician to incorporate cone-beam CT radiology in a private practice setting, according to the AO.

The GWDCAOSC is the culmination of a persistent, three-year effort of the AO Membership Committee initiated under chairman Dr. Jeffrey Ackerman, who serves as the study club’s president. Other instrumental key organizers of this effort include Dr. Clarence Lindquist, former AO and Osseointegration Foundation (OF) president, and GWDCAOSC vice president, and Dr. Douglas Dompkowski, vice-chair of the AO Membership Committee, who serves as treasurer.

One of the major goals of GWDCAOSC is to allow AO members to utilize the organization’s myriad online resources as part of a study club curriculum. These include webinars, e-posters, education modules, recordings from annual meetings and articles from the International Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (IJOMI).

The study club model also takes advantage of local AO experts to provide a curriculum for success and acts as an added membership value. Given its extremely successful performance, it’s very likely this program will serve as a model to attract AO membership and be expanded to other parts of the country and the world.

“The greater Washington D.C. area is rich in resources and there are so many world-class local and visiting AO members who can present to the study club,” Ackerman said.

However, he continued, this level of success may not as easily be achieved in every locality. According to Dr. Mehrdad Faghihi, a local periodontist and secretary of this group, an online forum is proposed to be included as a core piece of the study club curriculum for all AO members and organization staff.

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See MILESTONE, page B3

Dr. Steven Guttenberg, an oral and maxillofacial surgeon, presents at the Greater Washington D.C. Academy of Osseointegration Study Club’s anniversary meeting. Photo/Provided by the AO

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See GRANT, page B2
As part of the Innovation Grant program, SUNSTAR has committed to awarding six research grants to select AAP members over a three-year period beginning in 2017. The AAP's Research Submissions Committee examines all abstracts against criteria established by SUNSTAR and the academy.

The SUNSTAR Innovation Grant not only provides generous support to innovative studies, but it also extends the reach of the academy’s scientific agenda,” said Terrence J Griffin, DMD, president of the AAP. “By cultivating the clinical research of our members, the grant, in turn, provides avenues for enhancing overall patient health and wellbeing.” SUNSTAR fully supports Kapila’s selection as the grant’s inaugural winner. “SUNSTAR and the AAP share a common interest in innovative treatments and research that serve to alleviate the high burden of periodontitis in the U.S.,” said Aaron Pfarrer, senior director, professional relations. “We are confident that Dr. Kapila’s study will lay the groundwork for novel methods of periodontal disease prevention. We look forward to many important updates on this groundbreaking research.”

Kapila will present the results of her study at a future AAP Annual Meeting. The academy encourages members who are actively conducting scientific research in a clinical setting to submit research abstracts and proposals for consideration of future grant awards. Applications will be accepted in the fall.

For more information on the SUNSTAR Innovation Grant, contact Scientific Affairs Manager Stephanie Heffner at stephanie@perio.org.

About the AAP
The American Academy of Periodontology (AAP) represents more than 8,000 periodontists, specialists in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of inflammatory diseases affecting the gums and supporting structures of the teeth, and in the placement of dental implants. Periodontics is one of the nine dental specialties recognized by the American Dental Association. Learn more at perio.org.

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