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**News Release**

Medical College of Wisconsin **For more information, contact:**

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 **For Immediate Release:**

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**MCW receives grant supporting research in neurodegenerative disease**

The Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) has received a three-year, $740,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health’s (NIH) National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke funding research investigating how neurons clear toxic proteins involved in neurodegenerative disease.

Matthew Scaglione, Ph.D., assistant professor in biochemistry and an investigator in MCW’s neuroscience research center, is the principal investigator of the grant. Research in the Scaglione laboratory focuses on understanding how cells identify and then repair or eliminate toxic proteins.

Proteins are normally folded into specific three-dimensional structures, and the structure of a protein allows it to function normally within the cell. Misfolded proteins must therefore be degraded (broken down so they may no longer function) or re-folded into its proper configuration. Neurons in the body have the capability of eliminating these toxic proteins, and many neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer’s Disease, Parkinson’s Disease, Huntington’s Disease, and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) share a common feature: accumulation of aberrantly-folded proteins. The specific roles these clusters of misfolded proteins play in neurodegenerative disease and how neurons deal with them are unknown and are the subject of intense research efforts. The Scaglione laboratory has recently identified a novel enzyme involved in breaking down proteins. A major goal of this grant is to determine the role of this enzyme in cellular handling of toxic proteins.

The results of this project will provide insight into mechanisms by which neurons eliminate aberrant proteins, and may guide research in finding cures for neurodegenerative disease.

This project is funded by NIH grant 4R00NS073936-03.

**About the Medical College of Wisconsin**

*The Medical College of Wisconsin is the state’s only private medical school and health sciences graduate school.  Founded in 1893, it is dedicated to leadership and excellence in education, patient care, research and community engagement.  More than 1,200 students are enrolled in the Medical College’s medical school and graduate school programs in Milwaukee.  New regional medical education campuses are opening in Green Bay in 2015, and in Central Wisconsin in 2016, with each recruiting initial classes of 15-20 students.  A major national research center, MCW is the largest research institution in the Milwaukee metro area and second largest in Wisconsin.  In FY 2012-13, faculty received approximately $160 million in external support for research, teaching, training and related purposes, of which approximately $144 million is for research.  This total includes highly competitive research and training awards from the National Institutes of Health (NIH).  Annually, College faculty direct or collaborate on more than 2,000 research studies, including clinical trials. Additionally, more than 1,350 physicians provide care in virtually every specialty of medicine for more than 425,000 patients annually.*

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