

Dr. Wen Awarded \$2 Million NIH Grant

Ze Zhang Tom Wen, PhD, associate professor in the Department of Comprehensive Dentistry and Biomaterials, has recently been awarded a five-year renewal of an R01 National Institutes of Health/National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research grant. The NIH awarded Dr. Wen \$2,048,111 for his project, "BrpA in Virulence Modulation of *Streptococcus mutans*." Hui Wu, PhD, professor in the Departments of Pediatric Dentistry and Microbiology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, is co-investigator.

Dr. Wen's primary research interest lies in the areas of microbial genetics and ecology of oral biofilms. The overall goal of his research is to find novel strategies to combat human dental caries, which continues to be a major global health problem. The competitive renewal grant was designed to explore the potential of two new targets/proteins in the cariogenic bacterium *Streptococcus mutans* to disrupt and modulate the ability of the bacterium to colonize and persist on the tooth surface. Information derived from this study will indicate the effectiveness of these targets in facilitating the design of therapeutic and preventive strategies against dental caries.

Dr. Wen received a bachelor's degree in veterinary medicine in 1983 from the Jiangxi Agricultural University in Nanchang, China. He has master's degrees in veterinary pathology from Huazhong Agricultural University in Wuhan, China, and in animal and food industries (microbiology) from Clemson University in South Carolina.



Ze Zhang Tom Wen, PhD

In 1998, he received a PhD in animal sciences (microbiology) from the University of Nebraska in Lincoln.

Dr. Wen came to LSUSD in 2008 from the Department of Oral Biology at the University of Florida College of Dentistry. In addition to lecturing to dental and advanced

education students in courses such as microbiology, cariology, and research methods, he has mentored the research of many students in the various dental school programs. As a faculty member in the LSUHSC School of Graduate Studies and an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Microbiology, Immunology and Parasitology, Dr. Wen also lectures on advanced bacteriology to graduate students in both microbiology and the interdisciplinary program. He has authored or co-authored over fifty research papers published in peer-reviewed journals, book chapters, reviews, and conference proceedings. As a

principal investigator or co-investigator, Dr. Wen has been the recipient of five previous NIH grants. Besides the R01 grant, he serves as the principal investigator or co-investigator of two industrial grants. He has recently been notified that the NIH/NIDCR has approved funding for his R21 grant proposal, "eDNA Secretion and eDNA-Cell Interactions in Biofilm Formation."

The NIH Research Project Grant (R01) is the original and historically oldest grant mechanism used by NIH. The R01 provides support for health-related research and development based on the mission of the NIH.

Accolades for Periodontics Alumnus

Boris Stein, DDS, MS, a 2015 graduate of the LSUSD advanced education program in periodontics, was selected to compete for the 2015-2016 John F. Prichard Prize for Graduate Research, sponsored by the Southwest Society of Periodontists. He presented his research, "The Effect of Cigarette Smoke Extract (CSE) on Cell Survival on Implant Surfaces," at the Society's winter meeting on January 29, in Irving, Texas.

One of only six recent U.S. periodontics graduates selected to give an oral presentation in the basic



Dr. Boris Stein with Dr. Angela Gallis, research mentor and periodontics advanced education program director

science category of this prestigious competition, Dr. Stein was named one of three finalists in his section. Dr. Thomas Lallier, Department of Anatomy; and Drs. Pooja Maney and Angela Palaiologou-Gallis, both of the Department of Periodontics, were his research mentors. Dr. Stein is in private practice in Boston.

This is the second year in a row that an LSUSD periodontics graduate was chosen to compete for the Prichard Prize. Dr. Jyoti Puri, selected to compete for the 2014-2015 award, was also a finalist.