



Research Competition Receives Record Response

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Arlington, VA— OAR's 2006 Applied Research Competition closed with a rush April 7, as 73 researchers and research teams met the application deadline in applying for research grants from OAR. This response represents more than a 50 percent increase over 2005. With proposals from research teams in Canada and Italy, this competition sets a new mark in terms of the reach of OAR's annual research competition.

“OAR isn't a secret anymore,” says Dr. Peter Gerhardt, OAR's President and Chairman of OAR's Scientific Council. “In fact, this may set the record for the greatest number of applied research studies related to autism ever seen in a single competition anywhere.”

The topics addressed by the researchers reflect a broad range of issues concerning ASDs in children and adults. The pre-proposals cover areas of ongoing OAR interest including early identification, treatments and services and teaching as well as issues concerning individuals with Asperger Syndrome, adolescents, family support, and adults such as employment and community living. Because the competition is still in progress, OAR will not identify the researchers or the specific titles of their studies.

Members of OAR's Scientific Council, along with a number of guest reviewers, are currently evaluating the pre-proposals. Based on their scores and recommendations, OAR will invite full proposals for selected pre-proposals next month, and the principal investigators remaining in the competition will be asked to submit full proposals by Aug. 1. The Scientific Council will conduct the final review between Aug. 1 and Oct. 28 and OAR's Board of Directors will approve the grant awards for this competition on Oct. 29. OAR will announce the 2006 grant winners in November with funding to begin January 1.

Since 2003, OAR has awarded more than \$700,000 grants for applied research studies and graduate research grants. OAR's plans to award up to \$390,000 in grants for the most outstanding studies in this year's group. With these grants, OAR's total funding for applied research pilot studies, which began in 2003, will surpass \$1million by the end of this year.

“Not only are the numbers way up,” said Mike Maloney, OAR's Executive Director. “The quality of the proposals is too, guaranteeing the most difficult competition yet. It's frustrating to know that some excellent studies may go unfunded due to our funding limitations. We'll be working hard to minimize that between now and October.

To read abstracts of all studies OAR has funded, visit www.researchautism.org. For more information on either OAR's annual Applied Research Competition or the Graduate Research Grants Program, contact Sara Pelikan, at 703-243-9717, spelikan@researchautism.org.

ABOUT OAR: The Organization for Autism Research (OAR) is a national, nonprofit organization formed and led by relatives of children and adults with autism and Asperger Syndrome. OAR is dedicated to promoting research that can be applied to help families, educators, caregivers, and individuals with autism find much-needed answers to their immediate and urgent questions. Committed to the excellence in its services to the autism community, OAR seeks to fund applied research that will make a difference in individual lives; provide information that is timely, useful, and cost-efficient; and offer opportunities for the autism community to collaborate and make advances together.