

12/03/2024

Snow Medical Research Foundation - Empowering Australia's Next Biomedical Innovators

The Snow Medical Research Foundation (Snow Medical) today unveiled two new recipients of its esteemed Snow Medical Research Fellowships, marking another significant step forward for Australia's biomedical research sector. These fellowships, part of the Foundation's \$224 million commitment to health and medical innovation, are awarded to Professor Lara Malins from The Australian National University, and Associate Professor Loic Yengo from The University of Queensland.

This announcement not only highlights the Foundation's substantial investment in the future of Australian biomedical research but also introduces another cohort of the next leaders set to revolutionise healthcare and medical innovation in Australia, making the total number of Fellows supported 13.

The Snow Medical Research Fellowship, known for its transformative impact, provides a career-defining opportunity for its recipients. Each fellowship offers \$8 million over eight years, enabling these visionary scientists to develop groundbreaking research programs, build their teams, and lead the way in their respective fields.

This year's fellows, Professor Lara Malins from The Australian National University, and Associate Professor Loic Yengo from The University of Queensland are poised to tackle some of the most pressing health challenges facing the world today.

"Our family's commitment to nurturing the next generation of outstanding biomedical research leaders is stronger than ever. Through these fellowships, we aim to create an environment where diversity, inclusivity, and gender equality are not just valued but seen as essential components of exceptional research and high-performing teams," Chair of Snow Medical Tom Snow said.

"Our Foundation believes that supporting these emerging leaders with the independence, funding, and the time needed to innovate is crucial for driving the next generation of health and medical breakthroughs. This approach has already supported 13 Fellows, with over \$117 million committed to their groundbreaking work."

2024 Fellowship Recipients:

- **Professor Lara Malins** is pioneering advances in chemical biology and peptide synthesis, with her work holding the potential to unlock new pathways in drug discovery and development.

MEDIA RELEASE

- **Associate Professor Loic Yengo's** expertise in statistical genomics and human genetics is at the cutting edge of understanding how genetic variations influence health, offering new insights into disease prevention and treatment.

"Our family has a long-standing commitment to visionary research and diversity in leadership," Foundation founder Terry Snow said. "We are dedicated to fostering a future where the most ambitious and innovative biomedical research can flourish.

"By providing these fellowships, the Foundation not only invests in individual researchers and their teams but in the broader goal of transforming healthcare outcomes for communities worldwide."

The Snow Medical Research Fellowships will have long-lasting positive impacts for both the Fellows, their teams and their institutions.

"The Snow Fellowship is an extraordinary opportunity, providing my team with the stability to focus on preventing disease in people of all ancestries using their unique genetic profile," Associate Professor Loic Yengo said.

"It is always a better option to prevent people from developing a disease, and it's more cost effective for the health system. I'm very appreciative of this unique support from the Snow family, which will ultimately improve health equity by enhancing our ability to accurately predict disease risk regardless of a person's background."

Professor Lara Malins added her thanks to the Snow family.

"It's an incredible honour to be selected as one of this year's Snow Fellows. I'm joining a framework of fantastic and talented researchers. I think the appeal of this program to me and to my research group is the idea that medical research is the focus," Professor Malins said.

"As an organic chemist, I like to build molecules. And the truth is if you don't have new molecules, you don't have new medicines. We want to know how we can best use our chemistry tools to benefit humanity. Ultimately, I'm just excited to get into the lab."

ENDS

Media contacts

- Snow Medical - Chris Wagner: 0434 378 939
- ANU – Jessica Fagan - 0436 694 750.
- University of Queensland – Bronwyn Adams - 0405 661 856

MEDIA RELEASE

About the Snow Medical Foundation The Snow Medical Foundation is at the forefront of philanthropic efforts to advance biomedical research in Australia. With a commitment now totalling \$224 million, Snow Medical supports the development of outstanding biomedical research leaders and their teams, driving innovation and excellence in healthcare solutions for the future.

About the Fellows

Associate Professor Loic Yengo

leads the Statistical Genomics Lab at The University of Queensland's Institute of Molecular Bioscience (IMB)



Biography

Dr Loic Yengo is an Associate Professor at The University of Queensland (UQ) and Group Leader of the Statistical Genomics Lab within UQ's Institute for Molecular Bioscience. Loic was born in Brazzaville (Congo) and did his primary education in Congo, Cote d'Ivoire and France. After completing a PhD in applied mathematics at the University of Lille (France) in 2014, he joined UQ in 2016 for a postdoctoral training in Quantitative and Statistical Genetics. Loic started

his own lab in 2020 to investigate the causes and consequences of genetic variation within and between human populations. His group develops and applies novel statistical methods to analyse large volumes of genomic data. Loic's research has contributed to improve understanding of the genetic and phenotypic consequences of non-random mating (inbreeding and assortative mating) in human populations and has led to identify novel genetic variants associated with complex traits and diseases. Loic was the 2022 recipient of the Ruth Stephens Gani Medal of the Australian Academy of Science recognizing outstanding contributions to research in human genetics and was named in Nature Medicine's 2022 Yearbook among 11 early-career researchers "to watch". In 2024, Loic was awarded a Snow Medical Research Foundation Fellowship to accelerate the deployment of genomic risk prediction in the clinic and improve the benefit of genomic medicine in under-represented populations.

MEDIA RELEASE

Professor Lara Malins

Chief Investigator at the ARC Centre for Innovations in Peptide and Protein Science (CIPPS) - Australian National University



Biography

Professor Lara Malins is an acclaimed researcher in the fields of organic synthesis and chemical biology. Professor Malins is based at The Australian National University (ANU).

Her research group is working on new therapies for human illnesses by harnessing the power of peptides -

redeploying them to create new antibiotics, antimalarials and cancer treatments.

Born and raised in the United States, Professor Malins completed her PhD in Sydney before returning to the US as a National Institutes of Health postdoctoral fellow at Scripps Research, where she trained with world-renowned organic chemist Professor Phil Baran.

Professor Malins joined ANU in November 2017 and now leads a team of 17 researchers at ANU working on advancing medicinal chemistry to access new bioactive molecules for the treatment of disease.