INRC 2014 Awardees

Founder's lecture

Dr Brigitte Kieffer

B. L. Kieffer is Professor at McGill Univerity and at the Université de Strasbourg France. Her team uses mouse genetic approaches to tackle the role of opioid receptors in brain physiology and disorders, and to search for novel genes involved in psychiatric disorders. She has developed and shared exquisite genetic tools worldwide, and has developed innovative research lines with strong impact in neuroscience and biomedical research. Her work has important implications for the development of treatment of pain, drug abuse and emotional disorders. She is part of the Center for Opioid Receptors and Drugs of Abuse or CSORDA.

Pr. Kieffer is recipient of the Jules Martin (French Academy of Science, 2001) and the Lounsbery (French and US Academies of Science, 2004) Awards, and has become an EMBO Member in 2009. In 2012 she received the Lamonica Award of Neurology (French Academy of Science) and was nominated Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur. In December 2013 she was elected as a member of the French Academy of Sciences. She started as the Scientific Director of the Douglas Hospital Research Centre, affiliated to McGill University in January 2014.

Dr Christopher Evans

Christopher Evans received his Ph.D. from Imperial College London, conducting his thesis research on endorphins and enkephalins, at the Medical Research Council Institute in Mill Hill. After a postdoctoral fellowship at Stanford University, he joined the UCLA faculty in the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Science. His research accomplishments have included identification of a number of novel endogenous opioid peptides and the cloning of the first opioid receptor.

Dr. Evans is currently Director of the UCLA Brain Research Institute and the Stefan Hatos Professor directing the Shirley and Stefan Hatos Center for Neurophamacology in the UCLA Semel Institute. He is also director of a NIH-funded center – The Center for Opioid Receptors and Drugs of Abuse or CSORDA with the broad aim of understanding the action of opioid drugs such as morphine and heroin at the molecular, cellular and behavioral levels.

Young Investigator Award

Dr Michael Bruchas

Michael Bruchas's research training is in GPCR pharmacology and neuroscience. His graduate work focused on adrenergic receptors while his post-doctoral work was in the department of pharmacology, at the University of Washington, Seattle, in Charles Chavkin's laboratory. Here he studied opioid receptor biased signaling in behavior using mouse genetics and behavioral approaches. His laboratory at Washington University (St. Louis) investigates interactions between stress, GPCRs, neuropeptides, and neural circuits in affective behavior.

Recent efforts by his group have focused on developing tools for wireless optogenetics and optical GPCRs for examining signaling pathways and behavior in vivo. Using a variety of genetic, pharmacological, engineering, and optogenetic approaches, he will discuss recent efforts by his team to dissect the role of opioid peptides and receptor signalling in models of affective behavior.