

Joint media release: University of Oxford and Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation

Swiss Foundation Donates GBP 9.12 Million to Endow Permanent Breastfeeding Research Centre at University of Oxford

Oxford (UK) and Frauenfeld (Switzerland), 24 July 2024 – The University of Oxford and the Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation (FLRF) have signed an agreement to endow the Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation Oxford Centre for the Endocrinology of Human Lactation (LRF OCEHL) with a GBP 9.12 million donation from FLRF.

LRF OCEHL is the first research centre in the United Kingdom to investigate hormones involved in the production of breastmilk. Its aim is to solve hormone-related breastfeeding challenges and improve the health of mothers and children globally. Led by Professor Fadil Hannan, LRF OCEHL and its distinguished team are embedded in the Nuffield Department of Women's & Reproductive Health, John Radcliffe Hospital, part of the University of Oxford.

LRF OCEHL was established in 2018 with an initial grant of GBP 2.9 million from FLRF, laying the foundation for a permanent research centre which will now receive the endowment over the coming years. Endowments enable research centres to be self-funded and independent in perpetuity. With part of the endowment dedicated to generating pilot data from innovative ideas, chances of attracting additional grants also increase substantially. Thanks to this financing model, LRF OCEHL will be able to conduct high-quality research over long horizons.

“Our vision is to fill knowledge gaps that can improve lactation and breastfeeding outcomes. Thanks to this endowment, we have a unique opportunity to establish a line of research that’s been underappreciated for too long,” says Professor Krina Zondervan, Head, Nuffield Department of Women's & Reproductive Health, University of Oxford.

“We are delighted to be supporting mothers and children’s health with this endowment. It enables the world-renowned University of Oxford to target a neglected research topic – the physiology of breastfeeding. It is exciting to think that findings from LRF OCEHL will have the potential to improve breastfeeding outcomes globally,” says Dr. med. Marco Steiner, President, Foundation Board.

LRF OCEHL (www.ocehl.ox.ac.uk) is the latest of three independent research centres in Europe that have been endowed by FLRF, two of which are located at the University of Zurich in the Foundation's home of Switzerland:

- **Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation Center for Neurodevelopment, Growth and Nutrition of the Newborn** (LRF NGN), established in 2015 in affiliation with the Department of Neonatology of the University Hospital Zurich and directed by Professor Dr. med. Giancarlo Natalucci

- **Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation Center for Economics of Breastfeeding (LRF CEB)**, established in 2018 at the Department of Economics and directed by Professor David Yanagizawa-Drott

The other two centres are the **Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation Centre for Immunology and Breastfeeding (LRF CIBF)** in Australia and the **Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation Mother-Milk-Infant Center of Research Excellence (LRF MOMI CORE)** in the United States. Together these five fully funded centres form the **Global Human Milk Research Consortium (GHMRC)**, a multidisciplinary network of research excellence covering basic research – endocrinology, immunology, microbiome, neurodevelopment – and behavioural economics of breastfeeding and breastmilk.

About the Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation Oxford Centre for the Endocrinology of Human Lactation (LRF OCEHL)

LRF OCEHL's research focuses on the hormonal mechanisms or chemicals that control and regulate cells and organs in the production of breastmilk. The vision of LRF OCEHL is to build a holistic understanding, at the molecular and clinical level, of how hormones regulate human milk production and influence maternal-infant bonding – for the benefit of mothers' and children's health globally. www.ocehl.ox.ac.uk

About the Nuffield Department of Women's & Reproductive Health (NDWRH) at the University of Oxford

As an integral part of the Medical Science Division within the University of Oxford, the Nuffield Department of Women's & Reproductive Health (NDWRH), is the largest Women's & Reproductive Health department of its kind. Our offerings include postgraduate qualifications (such as DPhils and Masters in Clinical Embryology), a dynamic clinical studies group engaging with the public, and an extensive network of over 30 research groups led by world-leading experts across the diverse fields of cancer, maternal health, reproductive health, data science, and global health. For more information about NDWRH and its innovative initiatives, please visit www.wrh.ox.ac.uk or contact christopher.mcintyre@admin.ox.ac.uk / rob.phillips@wrh.ox.ac.uk.

About the University of Oxford

Oxford University has been placed number 1 in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings for the eighth year running, and number 3 in the QS World Rankings 2024. At the heart of this success are the twin-pillars of our ground-breaking research and innovation and our distinctive educational offer.

Oxford is world-famous for research and teaching excellence and home to some of the most talented people from across the globe. Our work helps the lives of millions, solving real-world problems through a huge network of partnerships and collaborations. The breadth and interdisciplinary nature of our research alongside our personalised approach to teaching sparks imaginative and inventive insights and solutions.

Through its research commercialisation arm, Oxford University Innovation, Oxford is the highest university patent filer in the UK and is ranked first in the UK for university spinouts, having created more than 300 new companies since 1988. Over a third of these companies have been created in the past five years. The university is a catalyst for prosperity in Oxfordshire and the United Kingdom, contributing £15.7 billion to the UK economy in 2018/19, and supports more than 28,000 full time jobs.

About the Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation

FLRF, established in Switzerland in 2013, is an independent philanthropic organization revitalizing the journey from science to impact. It takes a unique approach: its priority is to increase breastfeeding rates worldwide, so its focus is on helping build innovative, efficient pathways to get there. The team supports and collaborates with researchers, policymakers, practitioners, government leaders and partner organizations working to ensure every child has an optimum start in life through the benefits of breastmilk. Its work is focused in three areas across the journey to empower others: evidence generation to fill critical gaps; evidence-based tools and resources to inform new approaches; and collaboration and partnership to activate sustainable change. www.larsson-rosenquist.org

Media contacts

University of Oxford

Chris McIntyre, Communications Manager
(Research and Innovation)

Phone: +44 (0)1865 270 046

Email: christopher.mcintyre@admin.ox.ac.uk

Family Larsson Rosenquist Foundation

Dr. Katharina Lichtner

Phone Swiss media (DE): +41 79 725 22 15

Phone global media (EN): +41 79 590 11 34

Email: cpz@flrf.org

Weblinks

- Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation Oxford Centre for the Endocrinology of Human Lactation (LRF OCEHL): www.ocehl.ox.ac.uk
- University of Oxford: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/facts-and-figures/economic-impact>
- Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation: www.larsson-rosenquist.org

Photos available for editorial purposes in connection with this media release, including captions, can be downloaded free of charge at the following link: <https://www.flrf.droppy.ch/ucUkHDaL> (link active until August 6, 2024)



Photo 1: Reto Larsson, Larsson Family, Dr. Katharina Lichtner, Managing Director, Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation, Professor Irene Tracey, Vice-Chancellor, University of Oxford, Professor Krina Zondervan, Head, Nuffield Department of Women's & Reproductive Health, University of Oxford, and Michael Larsson, Founding and Honorary President, Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation at the endowment ceremony for the Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation Oxford Centre for the Endocrinology of Human Lactation (LRF OCEHL) at the University of Oxford. © University of Oxford / Cyrus Mower.



Photo 2: Professor Irene Tracey, Vice-Chancellor, University of Oxford, Michael Larsson, Founding and Honorary President, Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation, and Dr. Katharina Lichtner, Managing Director, Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation at the endowment ceremony for the Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation Oxford Centre for the Endocrinology of Human Lactation (LRF OCEHL) at the University of Oxford. © University of Oxford / Cyrus Mower.



Photo 3: Professor Fadil Hannan (back row, 3rd from left) and his research team in the laboratory of the Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation Oxford Centre for the Endocrinology of Human Lactation (LRF OCEHL) at the University of Oxford. © Oxford University; Rob Newcombe.



Photo 4: Laboratory of the Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation Oxford Centre for the Endocrinology of Human Lactation (LRF OCEHL). The research centre is part of the Nuffield Department of Women's & Reproductive Health located at the John Radcliffe Hospital at Oxford University. © Oxford University; Emma Newcombe.



Photo 5: Working in a laboratory in the Medical Sciences Division at the University of Oxford. (Note: Symbolic image: this picture was not taken at the research centre endowed by the Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation, but another laboratory at the University of Oxford). © Oxford University, Medical Sciences Division; John Cairns.