



MINISTERIO
DE ECONOMÍA
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AYUDAS RAMÓN Y CAJAL CONVOCATORIA 2013

SECRETARÍA DE ESTADO
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SUBDIRECCIÓN GENERAL
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Nombre: BARDAJI ALONSO, AZUCENA
Referencia: RYC-2013-14512
Área Científica: Medicina Clínica y Epidemiología
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Título:

MALARIA AND PREGNANCY. BURDEN AND IMPACT, AND EVALUATION OF PREVENTIVE STRATEGIES

Resumen de la Memoria:

Based on the true belief that research is an undeniable and powerful tool to tackle maternal and infant health problems in resource-poor settings, along with a genuine interest and determination towards malaria, my research track record has been focused throughout the last ten years on the epidemiology and clinical characterization of malaria in African pregnant women, and in the evaluation of the efficacy and effectiveness of preventive strategies to avoid the harmful effects of malaria during pregnancy. That interest led me in 2002 to join as medical research fellow the Manhica Health Research Centre (CISM) in Mozambique where I worked for more than three years.

During this fellowship in Mozambique I conducted a randomized placebo-controlled clinical trial to evaluate the effect of Intermittent Preventive Treatment with Sulfadoxine-Pyrimethamine (IPTp-SP) and Insecticide-Treated Nets (ITNs) for malaria control during pregnancy. The results of this trial contributed to guide policy towards the rational use of control tools for malaria prevention in pregnancy, and it demonstrated that IPTp is one of the most efficacious and cost-effective interventions to reduce neonatal mortality. During this time, I also investigated on the clinical characterization of malaria in African pregnant women, the impact of malaria during pregnancy on infant morbidity and survival, and the impact of HIV/AIDS on maternal and infant health.

In recent years, and as a consequence of the growing available data on the impact of *P. vivax* malaria, previously and mistakenly considered as benign, my interests and research work have also been directed to this neglected and complex species, as a natural and logical transition from previous research work. I have been investigating on the true burden of *P. vivax* in pregnancy and the impact on maternal and newborn health, as technical scientific coordinator and researcher of a multicentre collaborative project aimed at addressing knowledge gaps on *Vivax* malaria and pregnancy, the PREGVAX project.

The research work I have done within this project has allowed me to contribute with new and unique knowledge on the prevalence and incidence on *P. vivax* malaria during pregnancy, and on the impact of the infection. The results of this project have also helped in the understanding and insights of the physiopathological mechanisms involved in the *Vivax* infection in the placenta, and on the phenotypical profile of this species and adhesive features. This new evidence is expected to inform and guide the World Health Organization (WHO) in developing malaria global recommendations during pregnancy in endemic areas where *Vivax* malaria is predominant. This field of interest is aligned with the current global research agenda on malaria eradication that devotes particular attention to malaria epidemiology and transmission dynamics in areas of low-medium malaria endemicity.

Resumen del Currículum Vitae:

Since the beginning of my professional career my research interest has been always directed towards the health problems affecting most vulnerable populations in resource-poor settings and linked to poverty-related diseases. That led me to complete a training programme on Tropical Diseases at the Hospital Clinic in Barcelona. There, I had the opportunity to meet one of the most outstanding research groups on Global Health led by Prof. Pedro Alonso who and offered me a position as medical research fellow to join the Manhica Health Research Centre (CISM) in Mozambique where I worked for more than three years. During that time I was investigating in the evaluation of preventive strategies for the control of the harmful effect of malaria during pregnancy in African pregnant women. I also conducted several clinico-epidemiological studies on the clinical features of malaria during pregnancy and on the impact of HIV/AIDS on maternal and infant health.

Building on the research work I had conducted in Mozambique, I was encouraged by my supervisors Prof. Pedro Alonso and Prof. Clara Menéndez to pursue a formal academic career through a PhD doctorate programme on malaria during pregnancy. In 2006, and after having been awarded with a Fellowship for International Postgraduate Studies by Caja Madrid Foundation, I embarked upon my return from Africa in a Master Degree in Epidemiology at the London School of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (2006-2007). In 2009 I completed a PhD at the University of Barcelona on prevention of malaria in African pregnant women.

Over the past 6 years, I have been investigating on malaria due to *P. vivax* and pregnant women, as technical scientific coordinator



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and researcher of a multicentre collaborative project aimed at estimating the burden and impact of *P. vivax* infection in pregnancy on maternal and newborn health, the PREGVAX project, a EU FP7 funded programme. I established a set of management and research tools that allowed coordinating all the scientific issues related to the project in a harmonized way in a group of more than 20 scientists from 11 different research institutions. I have presented as first author results of this study at several international scientific meetings, and I am leading the analysis, interpretation, and writing up of the main publication of the project on the global burden and impact that is expected to be submitted before end of March 2014.

At present, I am also involved in operational research related to the introduction of the Human Papillomavirus vaccine in developing countries, and in a the pilot phase of vaccine trial to assess safety, efficacy and immunogenicity a Group B Streptococcal vaccine in Mozambican pregnant women. Moreover, I am an active member since 2012 of the RBM MiP-WG, and I am a collaborating researcher with the World Health Organization GMP in the development of research tools to address the programmatic determinants of the effectiveness of IPTp. I am a member of the Advisory Board of the Pregnancy and Safety Registry of Eurartesim®, an antimalarial for the treatment of uncomplicated malaria due to *P. falciparum*. Also, I participate as lecturer in several master degrees programmes, and I am currently the Academic Coordinator of the Master of Global Health, organized by the Barcelona Institute of Global Health (ISGlobal) and the University of Barcelona.



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Título:

Antioxidant compounds in inflammation-related metabolic human diseases: in vitro and in vivo pharmacological approaches

Resumen de la Memoria:

Under the guidance of Professors Josep Guarro Artigas and Javier Pastor Molas at Rovira i Virgili University (URV), my doctoral studies focused on the evaluation of novel antifungal agents using different animal models for opportunistic infections. The first stage of my postdoctoral training (2007-2010) allowed me to consolidate my skills in molecular mycology (including fingerprinting, multilocus sequencing typing, bioinformatics and phylogenetic analysis) at URV and included a short, but very productive, stay at the Westmead Millenium Institute in Sydney, Australia. During this one year sabbatical, I was fortunate to participate in international project applications with my host centre, and I was also given the opportunity to teach a postgraduate class at the University of Sydney. The second stage of my research is being carried out at the Institute of Research IISPV in Tarragona (2011-current), hosted by the University Hospital Joan XXIII. My experience with animal models, together with the molecular biology skills I have acquired, allowed me to successfully join the group of Dr. Garcia-España as a postdoctoral researcher. Dr Garcia-España's laboratory studies the molecular biology of the urothelium and was recently awarded a CONSOLIDER-SUPRAMED project to develop and characterize novel chemical compounds with anti-inflammatory/ anti-tumourigenic activity, which could be developed as therapeutic agents. During the first year of the project (2011), my efforts were centred on the optimization of biological assays to measure efficacy of test organic compounds. I now oversee all CONSOLIDER-SUPRAMED projects, and take the leading role from the design stage, to the collection of data and the preparation of scientific manuscripts. My research projects at University Hospital Joan XXIII have allowed me to cultivate an excellent working relationship with clinical researchers, and let me dovetail the basic science implications of my research with a more translational aspect, specifically the role of inflammation in human metabolic disease. The skills I have developed at the bench, together with my responsibilities as a lead investigator, afford me the experience to develop and advance a research line investigating novel anti-inflammatory drugs for metabolic syndromes e.g. insulin resistance. In summary, my work to date has resulted in the publication of 32 papers with a mean impact factor of 4.65; 2 further manuscripts have been recently submitted. Additionally, 10 of my first-author papers belong in the first decile, and 30 papers are in the first quartile. My H-index is 14.

Resumen del Currículum Vitae:

In 2002 I obtained my Biology degree in the University Autònoma of Barcelona. After that I received a PhD fellowship for 9 months to start my PhD project until I was funded by a URV pre-doctoral fellowship (2003-2007). My PhD research was focused on testing in different animal models new antifungal agents active against opportunistic fungi. As a result of my research in antifungal agents I published ten original scientific reports as first author and fifteen as a collaborator. In addition, during the years I was at the Rovira i Virgili University I got 48.5 credits (485 hours) as a professor at the 3rd course of Medical Degree and I was also involved as a teacher in a postgraduate course of Medical Mycology in 2007.

In July 2007 I obtained my PhD degree with a study entitled: **In vitro and in vivo activity of new antifungal agents against opportunistic fungi** that was award-winning by Rovira i Virgili University 2007. For the next 6 months, I learned molecular biology techniques applied to fungal studies funded by a University Rovira i Virgili postdoctoral contract.

In February 2008 I started my international post-doctoral research at Westmead Millenium Institute in Sydney, Australia in the laboratory of Professor Wieland Meyer. Although during this period I have been involved in several international projects, I worked principally in a project entitled "Phylogeny as a basis for Molecular Identification of pathogenic Fungi" and moreover thanks to my previous knowledge in animal models I optimized different animal models which helped two PhD students. During my postdoctoral research in Australia I published three papers, participated in seven international congresses and participated, as a teacher, in a postgraduate course at University of Sydney **Postgraduate studies in infection and immunity** (2008-2009).

In February 2009 I come back to Guarro's lab at URV funded with a six months contract to continue my postdoctoral research. During this time, we collaborated with Professor Antonio Di Pietro from Genetics Department in University of Cordoba; fruit of this collaboration we published a paper in The Journal of Biological Chemistry.

In 2010 I've got a position in the group **Research in diabetes and metabolic syndrome** of CIBERDEM in the Institute of Health Research Pere Virgili (IISPV) where I analyzed how cytokines affected intracellular inflammatory pathways in adipocytes. During this period, I met Dr. Antonio García-España head of the IISPV group **Molecular Biology of the Urothelium** who offered me a postdoctoral position for five years (2011-2015) to do research focus on the characterization of new compounds with anti-inflammatory or anti-tumourigenic activity that could be developed into therapeutic agents. To date, I published one paper in the



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Journal of the American Chemical Society (JACS) with 10.5 impact factor. I am the main responsible for carrying out the CONSOLIDER projects from the design, and together with Dr. Antonio García-España, to the writing of the manuscripts. In García-España's lab I supervised different students who performed with us their end of college projects.

As a summary of my CV, I have published 32 papers and currently 2 more are under submission. Additionally, ten of my first authors' papers belong to first decile and 30 papers are in the first quartile. I have an H index of 14.



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Nombre: FERNANDEZ DUARTE, TAHIA DIANA
Referencia: RYC-2013-13138
Área Científica: Medicina Clínica y Epidemiología
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Título:

Study of the immunological mechanisms involved in drug hypersensitivity reactions.

Resumen de la Memoria:

The candidate joined the Cellular Biology department at the Malaga University in 2001 working on the morphologic and genetic mechanisms that control the development and regeneration of Zebra fish (*Danio rerio*) fin. In 2003 she obtained a grant to work in the group of research of allergic diseases, in Carlos Haya Hospital, coordinated by Dr. Blanca. Her main research line was the study of the allergic reactions induced by drugs working extensively on the immunological mechanisms at the molecular level underlying hypersensitivity reactions to drugs, both IgE and T cell mediated. In IgE reactions the candidate has analyzed the presence of drug-specific IgE in the sera of allergic patients using radioimmunoassays and bound to the surface of basophils using flow cytometry methods like basophil activation test (BAT). She has studied the utility of BAT to diagnose betalactam allergic patients, establishing that the sensitivity of this test is similar to immunoassays. She has also established that the rate of IgE negativisation over time in this type of reactions is faster than previously thought which is critical for diagnosis. In T cell mediated reactions the candidate has carried out many studies monitoring the acute phase of the drug allergic reaction by a sequential analysis of both skin and peripheral blood samples. These studies have shaped her PhD thesis work. In that sense, the expression of different Th1 and Th2 cytokines, chemokines and their receptors, transcription factors and cytotoxic markers into CD4 and CD8 subpopulations were assessed in patients with maculopapular exanthema (MPE).

After her PhD she pursued her research career at the Pasteur Institute in Paris. She participated in the European project "Role of quórum sensing mechanisms in the immune system's regulation" which aim was to compare homogeneous populations of naïve and memory B cells of known antigen specificity, belonging to the same clone and to correlate these properties to their gene expression patterns.

At the end of 2011 she moved back to Malaga with a grant from the Juan de la Cierva program. She has applied her expertise in B cells in the development of a project granted for the Andalusian government focused on the improvement of the immunotherapy treatments in patients with allergic rhinitis sensitized to *Dermatophagoides pteronyssinus*. Thanks to her knowledge in T cell mediated drug allergic reactions, she has got funds to develop the project titled: "Role of Th1/Th17 Lymphocytes and Galectin-9-Tim-3 axes in the regulation of skin delayed drug hypersensitivity". That tries to find new biomarkers that could be used as predictors for skin diseases.

Furthermore she is collaborating with Dra. Montañez, a chemical researcher working at the nanomedicine centre BIONAND in Malaga (Centro Andaluz de Nanomedicina y Biotecnología), to investigate the potential of nanoparticles to improve immunoassay of drug allergy disease. In the last year she has also been collaborating with Dr. Santos from the Helsinki University in Finland, with the Dr. Le Guevel from BIONAND and with Dr. Rojo from Instituto de Investigaciones Químicas, CSIC in the studies for analysing the immunological recognition of different micro and nanoparticles that can act as carriers for allergen or drug delivery, as adjuvants to develop allergen specific immunotherapies or virus vaccines.

Resumen del Currículum Vitae:

The candidate received joined the Cellular Biology department at the Malaga University in 2001. Her studies were reported in two international publications (Murciano C. et al. *Dev Biol.* 2002, 252:214; Murciano C. et al. *Dev Biol.* 2007, 312:272). During this period she also participated in two international congresses. In 2003 she incorporates the group of allergic diseases coordinated by Dr. Miguel Blanca, in Carlos Haya Hospital. In 2004 she obtained a fellowship from The Andalusia Regional Government to start her PhD research under the supervision of Dra. Cristobalina Mayorga and Dra. Maria Jose Torres. During her training period her studies lead to 11 publications in high impact journals, with two of them as first author (Fernandez T et al. *ClinExp Allergy.* 2005, 35:1645; Fernández TD et al. *Allergy.* 2009, 64:242). She obtained her PhD in April 2008 with a thesis about the molecular mechanisms involved in the development of maculopapular exanthema getting three new publications (Fernandez TD et al. *Allergy.* 2008, 63:712; Fernández TD et al. *Curr Opin Infect Dis.* 2009, 22:272; Fernandez TD et al. *Int J ImmunopatholPharmacol.* 2010, 23:437). During her PhD, she was involved in five funded research projects from national entities and also took part to the redaction of different grant proposals, research projects. She achieved 17 international publications, 4 as first author, and invited to write a review in the *Current Opinion of Infectious Diseases*. She has attended to more than 15 international conferences with more than 30 communications (posters and oral presentations). She is co-authored of two chapters in a congress outreach book and authored another two. She supervised PhD students in the biology laboratory and contributed in the training of Allergy Fellows from the Allergy Service in



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practical aspects of allergy laboratory. After her PhD she pursued her research career at the Pasteur Institute, Paris, in Professor Freita's Laboratory for three years. She was awarded by a competitive 2 years grant funded by the  Foundation pour la recherche médicale . During her fellow, she was involved in two founded projects: one from the french Agence National de la Recherche and other from the European Research Council, (2010 to 2015). In this period she got 2 international publications (Lochner M et al. J Immunol. 2011, 186:1531; Montaudouin C et al. J Immunol. 2013, 190:106). At the end of 2011 she moved back to Malaga to Miguel Blanca's group with a grant from the Juan de la Cierva program. Her research works were reported in 6 new papers (Campo P et al. Curr. Opin.Allergy ClinImmunol. 2013, 13:337; Salas M et al. Contact Dermatitis. 2013, 69:189; Salas M et al. Allergy.2013, 68:1203; Sanchez-Quintero MJ et al. PLOS ONE 2013, 9; Fernandez TD et al. Allergy 2014, ahead of print; Ariza A, Fernandez TD et al. Cytometry Part A 2014, ahead of print). She is also the principal investigator a project granted for the Andalusian Health Service (PI-0352-2012). Furthermore she is collaborating with Dra. Montañez, a chemical researcher working at the nanomedicine centre BIONAND in Malaga (Centro Andaluz de Nanomedicina y Biotecnología), in a project granted for ISCIII (PI12/02529). She is also collaborating with Dr. Le Guevel from BIONAND, Dr. Santos from Helsinki University in Finland and Dr. Rojo from Instituto de Investigaciones Químicas, CSIC.



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Referencia: RYC-2013-14779
Área Científica: Medicina Clínica y Epidemiología
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Título:

Generation of new therapy strategies for muscular dystrophies

Resumen de la Memoria:

Muscular dystrophies are a group of diseases characterized by the primary wasting of skeletal muscle. These diseases are among the most difficult to treat and can originate a complete paralysis and premature death before adulthood. My present research line is focused on the development of new advanced therapy strategies (gene, cell and pharmacological therapies) against LGMD2A and Duchenne dystrophies, two of the most frequent forms of muscular dystrophy. My hypothesis is that dysregulation of calcium homeostasis is involved in the etiology of these diseases. My main goal is to identify novel molecular targets and modulate their activity by using pharmacological and gene strategies. To achieve this goal, I will use mouse and human in vitro cell culture systems, skeletal muscle from control donors and patients with muscular dystrophies and mouse models of these forms of muscular dystrophy. First, I plan to characterize in detail the expression levels and localization pattern of the most relevant calcium-handling proteins in dystrophin- and calpain 3-deficient muscles. Then, I will focus on the in vitro and in vivo modulation of the expression and function of candidate targets in order to ameliorate the dystrophic phenotype by using pharmacological compounds or adeno-associated virus injection. This approach takes advantage of my extensive expertise with cellular and molecular biology and mouse models of neuromuscular diseases, and the availability of human dystrophic samples from Donostia Hospital. This research line will help to the development of alternative treatments for Duchenne and LGMD2A muscular dystrophies based on the regulation of calcium homeostasis, and overall it will let us move forward in the knowledge of the calcium-related pathogenic mechanisms underlying these diseases.

Resumen del Currículum Vitae:

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

December 2011- Present: Principal Investigator at the Neuroscience Area, Biodonostia Institute, San Sebastian, Spain
April 2010-November 2011: Postdoctoral Fellow at Ilundain Foundation / Donostia Hospital, San Sebastián, Spain
November 2004- May 2009: Postdoctoral Fellow at the Reichardt Laboratory, Dpt. of Physiology, University of California, San Francisco, USA.
September 2003- November 2004: Postdoctoral Scientist at Carlos Matute Laboratory, Dpt. Neuroscience, Faculty of Medicine, University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU), Spain.
June 1998- September 2003: PhD Student, Carlos Matute Laboratory, Dpt. Neuroscience, Faculty of Medicine, UPV/EHU, Spain.
January 1997 - June 1998: Undergraduate research collaborator Dpt. of Immunology, Faculty of Science, UPV/EHU, Spain.

EDUCATION

2003: PhD in Neuroscience, Faculty of Medicine, University of the Basque Country, Spain
PhD Thesis: Role of glutamate transporters in multiple sclerosis
1998: BSc in Biological Sciences, University of the Basque Country, Spain.

SCIENTIFIC PRODUCTION

Total publications: 14 (13 articles and 1 book chapter)
Number of publications indexed in the JCR: 13
- 4 of them as first author
- 2 as senior author
- 4 corresponding author
- 3 papers Submitted and under revision (corresponding author in 2 of them).
Accumulated impact factor of the journals (JCR 2012, 5-year IF): 81.6
Mean Impact Factor: 6.277
Average Rank position within subject category (JCR, 5-year IF): 14.9
Times cited: 430
h-index: 10 (10 articles with more that 10 cites in the last 5 years).

PATENTS



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2008: Matute et al., No: 20080200384

2008: Vallejo-Illarramendi et al., No: 20080113347

RESEARCH FUNDING

As principal researcher (PI)- 5 Grants and 3 Contracts (520.717€)

- Basque Government- Dpt. Industry (SAIOTEK): 121.852€ (2 projects: 2010, 2012)

- Basque Government- Department of Health: 28.720€

- Instituto Salud Carlos III: 83.940 € (PI11/01499)

- Marie Curie International Reintegration Grant: 100.000 € (IRG256512)

- PhD Fellowship for I.Toral: 73.282 €

- PhD Fellowship for G.Aldanondo: 64.923 €

- Postdoctoral Fellowship for International Stay (Basque Government): 48.000 €

As research partner:

- Howard Hughes Medical Institute and National Institutes of Health Grant (R01 NS19090) awarded to Dr. L Reichadt, co-funded my Postdoctoral Stay at UCSF.

Participation in research networks: 1 (CiberNed, 2011)

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

2013: Invited Member of the Editorial Board of the *Journal of International Embryology*

2004: Postdoctoral Fellowship from the Basque Government

2003: Extraordinary Doctoral Award (Thesis dissertation) from the University of the Basque Country

2003: Alberto Rábano Award from Fundación Romanillos to the best best spanish Thesis in clinical neurology, neurosurgery and psychiatry (7.000 €)

2002: Travel Fellowship from the Basque Government for an International Stay (India, 2.000€)

1998-2002: Predoctoral Fellowship from the Basque Government

1997: Collaboration Award, an Undergraduate Fellowship from the Basque Government

SUPERVISION OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

PhD. Thesis: 2 under supervision (2nd and 3rd year)

BSc. Projects: 1 under supervision (Pharmaceutic undergraduate student)

INTERNATIONAL STAYS

National Center for Biological Sciences (Bangalore, India): 2 months

University of California, San Francisco (USA): 53 months

OTHER

3 maternity leaves (2007, 2009, 2010)