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FORTH - IMBB postdoctoral researcher receives the AXA Research Fund Postdoctoral Fellowship

Dr. Konstantinos Palikaras, Postdoctoral researcher at IMBB, has been awarded the highly competitive AXA Research Fund postdoctoral Fellowship of 130.000€ to pursue his studies.

AXA Research Fund has spent 10 million euros to research projects aiming to move society forward on major environmental, socioeconomic, digital and health-related issues. The AXA Research Fund supports 38 researchers of 16 nationalities, along with its objective to respond to major research issues worldwide and conscious about its urgent need of support.

With the world's population ageing, degenerative diseases have become a high priority topic for our society. Understanding the mechanisms of neuronal ageing is absolutely crucial to envision new and innovative strategies to improve end-of-life care and find novel therapeutic approaches for degenerative diseases. In this sense, Dr. Palikaras' project will significantly contribute to unravelling the cellular and molecular basis of age-related neurodegenerative diseases.

Dr. Palikaras' funded research aims to investigate the molecular pathways orchestrating mitochondrial dynamics and mitophagy in neuronal function and metabolism during ageing. To conduct his research, Dr. Palikaras will use a highly malleable genetic model organism, the worm *Caenorhabditis elegans*. Combining this powerful model organism with state of the art imaging technologies, Dr. Palikaras will be able to monitor mitochondrial biogenesis and mitophagy *in vivo* and decipher the molecular mechanisms mediating neuronal degeneration during ageing.

Dr. Konstantinos Palikaras earned his PhD degree at the University of Crete, Greece, under the supervision of Prof. Nektarios Tavernarakis (IMBB-FORTH, Medical School, University of Crete). During his PhD studies, he unravelled a homeostatic feedback loop that allows cells to adjust and maintain their mitochondrial metabolism by the coordination of two opposing cellular processes, mitochondrial biogenesis and mitophagy, in response to environmental and intracellular cues.

In 2016 he joined the lab of Prof. Tavernarakis (IMBB - FORTH Crete, Greece) as a postdoctoral fellow. He has attracted competitive funding and several awards for his research: This includes a Bodossaki Foundation long term fellowship for postdoctoral studies, "Foti Kafatos" award for excellence in biology by the Hellenic Society of Bioscientists, DeLill Nasser Award for Professional Development in Genetics by the Genetic Society of America (GSA) and Manasaki Doctoral Fellowship by the University of Crete.

His work has been published as original articles in prominent journals, such as Nature and Current Biology.

More information / Contact:

http://www.tavernarakislab.gr/people/konstantinos_palikaras.html

<https://gallery.axa-research.org/en/news/new-projects-2017.htm>

<https://www.axa-research.org/en/projects/konstantinos-palikaras>

<https://youtu.be/bWCr4dqcl6c>