

Blind wins Tabor award for work on nuclear lipids

By Mariana Figuera Losada

In August, Raymond Blind of Vanderbilt University won the **Journal of Biological Chemistry/Herb Tabor Young Investigator Award** at the 2016 Phospholipid Signaling in Cancer, Neurodegeneration and Cardiovascular Disease Conference in Steamboat, Colorado. Blind, who has demonstrated that lipid-signaling enzymes can activate genes, received the award from JBC Associate Editor George M. Carman from Rutgers University.

In addition to being part of cell membranes, lipids, in particular a pool of nonmembrane associated nuclear lipids, also can act as signaling molecules. Researchers have shown that lipid-signaling enzymes are involved in several cancers and in the progression of diabetes. Using genomics, biochemistry and structural biology, Blind and colleagues showed that the phospholipid-binding domains found on lipid-signaling enzymes may sense the presence of nuclear phosphoinositides and induce gene activation. These discoveries, when coupled to work published by others, suggest that nuclear phosphoinositides may act similarly to chromatin histone modifications by reversibly regulating gene transcription.

Blind, a native of Buffalo, New York, completed his Ph.D. on nuclear receptor transcriptional activation in Michael Garabedian's laboratory at New York University. For his postdoctoral training, he joined the laboratories of Tom Scanlan and



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Raymond Blind

Holly Ingraham at the University of California, San Francisco, where he developed the work recognized by the Tabor award. In 2015, Blind became an assistant professor at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine in the division of endocrinology, metabolism and diabetes, with appointments in the departments of pharmacology and biochemistry.

Blind's research is funded by the National Cancer Institute, the Vanderbilt Diabetes Research and Training Center, and the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center through the Ameri-

can Cancer Society. Besides doing research, Blind is also an educator who works to support young under-represented scientists as evidenced by his postdoctoral experience teaching biochemistry at Muhimbili School of Medicine in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, to help improve East African health care in collaboration with UCSF Global Health Sciences.



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