

NIH Director's Early Independence Awardees Meeting

December 14, 2011 - Video Transcript

Voice over of Dr. Francis Collins, MD, PhD, NIH Director: I am delighted to welcome you all here for the initiation of the Early Independence Award program. We clearly thought there would be individuals out there with exceptional abilities in terms of independence, creativity, maturity, that would benefit from having the chance to skip the post-doc and move directly into a position of more independence and that's what this program is about.

Interview with Dr. James Anderson, MD, PhD, Director, Division of Coordination, Planning and Strategic Initiatives (DPCPSI): This award provides support for people who have just finished the PhD or a medical residency and it's at a level that allows them to build their own lab and their own team and pursue their own research ideas. So there's a tremendous pool or opportunity to harness creativity younger than we're doing. And we hope it becomes a general approach to getting people pursuing their own science earlier.

Interview with Carissa Olsen, PhD, Early Independence Awardee: I was really excited about the work that I was doing as a graduate student, and normally you sort of leave that behind and do something new. So this really gave me an opportunity to continue sort of the thing that I was most passionate and interested about.

Interview with Rodney Samaco, PhD, Early Independence Awardee: I just finished my PhD and now I can pursue whatever I want, and what I selected is to study social behavior in mouse models.

Interview with Nicole Basta, PhD, Early Independence Awardee: I'll be able to work a lot more independently and have a lot more control over my research and my research agenda than I would have otherwise.

Interview with Harris Wang, PhD, Early Independence Awardee: I'm working on engineering the human microbiome. Some of the traditional funding mechanisms are probably less accommodating towards having such a young investigator go through with such an ambitious project.

Interview with James Fraser, PhD, Early Independence Awardee: It allowed me to think big. So it allowed me to really take stock of the things as a graduate student and think about how to apply them to a more broad research vision. Now I'm thinking really at a general level: how do mutations work in proteins and how can we better interpret genome sequences and use the level of atomic detail that we get from these biophysical techniques to really understand human genetics better?