**Lupus Foundation of America and Lupus Canada Award Grant for Study**

**to Better Predict Pregnancy Outcomes for People with Lupus**

**Washington, D.C.** – **September 23, 2020** – The Lupus Foundation of America and Lupus Canada today announced Leslie Skeith, MD, Clinical Assistant Professor in the Division of Hematology & Hematological Malignancies, University of Calgary and Megan Barber, MD, PhD, clinical lecturer in the Division of Rheumatology, University of Calgary as the 2020 [Lupus Canada Catalyst Award](https://www.lupus.org/news/lupus-foundation-of-america-and-lupus-canada-partner-to-advance-lupus-research) recipients.

The award supports and provides funding for one year to Canadian researchers at any stage in their career as they embark on innovative research projects that can advance the field and significantly impact the lives of people with lupus.

“We are dedicated to uniting lupus researchers and experts to identify the cause, control the symptoms of and ultimately discover a cure for lupus,” said Stevan W. Gibson, president and CEO, Lupus Foundation of America. “Our partnership with Lupus Canada for the Lupus Canada Catalyst Award increases the impact of lupus research in North America as we work to accelerate lupus research.”

“As the only Canadian national organization dedicated to lupus research, Lupus Canada plays a leadership role in drawing upon the best resources from across the country and focuses on priorities that benefit all people impacted by lupus. We are confident our partnership with the Lupus Foundation of America through the Catalyst Grant program will help to further advance lupus research as we support the brightest researchers in North America,” shared Tanya Carlton, President, Lupus Canada.

Under the mentorship of Dr. Ann Clarke, Dr. Skeith and Dr. Barber will be researching why pregnancy complications occur in women with lupus and antiphospholipid syndrome (APS), an autoimmune disorder and acquired blood clotting condition that is commonly seen in people with lupus.

Using a new test to study activation of the complement system – a system of proteins in the immune system – along with new high-resolution platelet imaging, Drs. Skeith and Barber will study the changes in the complement system and platelets in pregnant patients with lupus to see how the two systems may be linked. The study will help better identify how the problems of pregnancy happen in women with lupus and APS in order to better predict who may develop complications, and to study targeted therapies to improve outcomes for mothers and their babies.

“Despite standard treatments during pregnancy for people with lupus who have APS, there is still a high chance of serious problems like preeclampsia and pregnancy loss. With support from Lupus Canada’s Lupus Canada Catalyst Award and the Lupus Foundation of America, our study will bring a better understanding to why these complications occur so we can predict and prevent these problems in future pregnancies,” shared Dr. Skeith. “We are tackling this important problem with experts in different areas, including hematologists, rheumatologists, laboratory scientists and a patient representative with lupus, so we can also bring in the patient perspective.”

Learn more about the [Lupus Canada Catalyst Grant and the awardees](http://www.lupus.org/advancing-research/2020-recipients-of-the-lupus-canada-catalyst-award).

**About Lupus**

[Lupus](https://www.lupus.org/resources/what-is-lupus) is an unpredictable and misunderstood autoimmune disease that ravages different parts of the body. It is difficult to diagnose, hard to live with and a challenge to treat. Lupus is a cruel mystery because it is hidden from view and undefined, has a range of symptoms, strikes without warning, and has no known cause and no known cure. Its health effects can range from a skin rash to a heart attack. Lupus is debilitating and destructive and can be fatal, yet research on lupus remains underfunded relative to diseases of similar scope and devastation.

**About the Lupus Foundation of America**

The Lupus Foundation of America is the national force devoted to solving the mystery of lupus, one of the world's cruelest, most unpredictable and devastating diseases, while giving caring support to those who suffer from its brutal impact. Through a comprehensive program of research, education, and advocacy, we lead the fight to improve the quality of life for all people affected by lupus. Learn more about the Lupus Foundation of America at [lupus.org](http://www.lupus.org).

**About Lupus Canada**

Lupus Canada is a non-profit organization dedicated to the mission and vision of improving the lives of Canadians living with lupus through research, advocacy, public awareness and education. No other Canadian organization provides a bigger opportunity to make an impact on lupus and those who live with this debilitating disease. Learn more about Lupus Canada at [lupuscanada.org](http://www.lupuscanada.org).

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