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Press Release

UK Researcher Wins Prestigious IBSA Foundation Fellowship for Pioneering Dermatology Study

- *Masami Ando Kuri from the Wellcome Sanger Institute named one of six global winners of the 2024 IBSA Foundation Fellowships.*
- *Awards ceremony held in Milan, where the 2025 call for proposals was also officially launched.*
- *Each Fellowship awards €32,000 to support innovative, early-career research in underexplored scientific fields.*

Milan, 27 May 2025 – A researcher from the Wellcome Sanger Institute near Cambridge has been awarded a prestigious international Fellowship by the IBSA Foundation for scientific research, recognising her groundbreaking work on skin cell biology.

Dr Masami Ando Kuri, originally from Mexico, is one of six global winners of the 2024 IBSA Foundation Fellowships, each worth €32,000. Her dermatology research titled, ***“A single cell and spatial transcriptomic atlas of human skin Schwann cells in health and disease,”*** was selected from a record-breaking 259 submissions worldwide across five therapeutic areas.

Now in its twelfth year, the Fellowship programme champions early-career scientists whose projects have the potential to drive innovation in lesser-explored areas of medical science. Since its launch, 58 research projects have been supported with a total of €1.6 million in funding.

Ando Kuri’s study focuses on the role of Schwann cells – the most abundant glial cells in the peripheral nervous system – in skin health and disease. While these cells are known for their role in tissue repair, their involvement in skin conditions such as atopic dermatitis, psoriasis and keloids remains unclear. Her project aims to create a comprehensive atlas using advanced spatial and single-cell transcriptomic techniques, to map cellular diversity.

“Behind every medical breakthrough, there is a scientist with a big idea and someone who believed in them,” said Marco Menabrito, Medical Director, IBSA UK. *“Funding research isn’t just about science; it’s about giving bright minds the chance to make a real difference for patients.”*

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This year's winners were announced at a ceremony in Milan, where the Foundation also launched the 2025 call for proposals. As in 2024, six €32,000 Fellowships will be awarded across five therapeutic areas: dermatology, endocrinology, fertility/urology, pain medicine/rheumatology/orthopaedics, and healthy ageing/regenerative medicine. The sixth scholarship will be assigned to the category with the most applications. In addition, a new €5,000 Research Equity Prize will also be introduced, recognising the best project from a researcher based in a developing country.

Since its inception in 2012, the Fellowship programme has attracted 1,645 applications from researchers under 40 from 60 countries, 63% of which were submitted by female researchers.

“Supporting the talent of young researchers is a strategic investment that drives scientific progress and helps shape a society better equipped to tackle future challenges,” said Dr Silvia Misiti, Director of the IBSA Foundation. *“In a time when access to scientific careers is increasingly complex, our Fellowships offer a concrete way to recognise merit and promote innovation.”*

Applications for the 2025 Fellowships must be submitted by **31 January 2026** through [the platform](#).

Ends

For further information:

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Notes to Editors

For interview requests with Masami Ando Kuri about her award-winning project, or to request additional images or background information, please contact: helen@helenpopepr.co.uk

Further information about the IBSA Foundation and the IBSA Foundation Fellowships is available on request.

About Masami Ando Kuri

Masami Ando Kuri is a Postdoctoral Fellow in Computational Biology at the Wellcome Sanger Institute, working within the Cellular Genomics programme. Originally from Mexico, she holds a PhD in Medical Science from the University of Cambridge and has extensive experience in single-cell and spatial transcriptomics. Her research focuses on understanding the role of Schwann cells in skin health and disease using advanced bioinformatics and spatial omics approaches. Masami has held prior research roles at the Netherlands Cancer Institute and has published widely in high-impact journals.

About IBSA

IBSA (*Institut Biochimique SA*) is a Swiss pharmaceutical multinational with 20 subsidiaries across Europe, China, and the United States. Its products are available in over 90 countries, and its R&D activities focus on 10 therapeutic areas. In 2025, IBSA will celebrate the 40th anniversary of its acquisition by current President and CEO, Arturo Licenziati, who has transformed the company into a multinational corporation employing over 2,300 personnel worldwide. IBSA's growth and development can be attributed to its ability to innovate by refining well-known molecules, as well as to its commitment to looking to the future responsibly and transparently, thanks to the dedication and dynamism of its people.

About IBSA Foundation for scientific research

Established in 2012 in Lugano by the pharmaceutical company IBSA (*Institut Biochimique SA*), IBSA Foundation for scientific research is the main promoter of IBSA Group's social responsibility activities.

The Foundation promotes “Science for all” through accessible information and activities that unite scientific and humanistic culture. Its initiatives include high-level forums featuring internationally renowned scientists, educational events, conferences on art-and-science and health-and-culture and research scholarships in various areas of basic and clinical research.