

IBRI announces research team for its Diabetes Center

INDIANAPOLIS, July 25, 2019 – The Indiana Biosciences Research Institute (IBRI) today announced new investigators for the [IBRI Diabetes Center \(IDC\)](#).

At its first diabetes seminar, held today at Lilly Research Laboratories, the IBRI announced that [Decio Eizirik, M.D., Ph.D.](#), professor and director of the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) Center for Diabetes Research, Brussels, Belgium, is IBRI Research Fellow in the IDC, effective July 22, 2019.

Dr. Eizirik is responsible for innovative research that clarifies the mechanisms underlying type 1 diabetes (TD1) and translating the findings into new therapeutics for the treatment and prevention of the disease. He will direct diabetes researchers at the IBRI and collaborate with leading diabetes research scientists in Indiana's academic, pharmaceutical and biotech sectors.

"We are very fortunate to have a leading global researcher like Dr. Eizirik join our diabetes research team," said Jay McGill, IBRI chief operating officer. "His expertise will help take our research to the next level and make the IDC the local, national and international nexus for advanced diabetes research it aspires to be."

Dr. Eizirik is joined by [Donalyn Scheuner, Ph.D.](#), who started with the IBRI in March 2019 as senior staff scientist in the IDC. She is responsible for planning and coordinating the research on the mechanisms of pancreatic beta cell dysfunction and death in TD1, working in close collaboration with Dr. Eizirik. She was previously a scientific consultant and a senior scientist with Eli Lilly and Company (Lilly).

Joining the IDC July 15, 2019, was [William Carter, M.S.](#), research analyst, who is assisting with T1D research in Dr. Eizirik's labs. He was previously manager of the IUPUI-Indianapolis Transgenic Core Facility.

Jonathan Flak, Ph.D., will join the IBRI on Sept. 1, 2019, as senior scientist. He will further develop a program studying the central nervous system's regulation of glucose metabolism as it relates to diabetes. He was previously a research investigator in the University of Michigan Medical School's Department of Internal Medicine in Ann Arbor, Mich.

Carol Witzak, Ph.D., will join the IBRI on Dec. 16, 2019, as associate research fellow. Her research will focus on factors that regulate skeletal muscle glucose and protein metabolism. She was previously an associate professor at East Carolina University in Greenville, N.C. Additional candidates are being interviewed for the IDC.

The IDC is led by [Robert Considine, Ph.D.](#), professor of medicine at Indiana University (IU) School of Medicine and director of the IDC. Considine joined the IBRI in the fall of 2018 with the integration of the Lilly Diabetes Center of Excellence into the IDC, a collaboration to increase talent and funding for expanded diabetes research at the IBRI with Lilly and IU School of Medicine.

“We’ve assembled a strong team to complement and expand the research the IBRI has been doing in regenerative medicine as it applies to diabetes,” Considine said. “That work, which was led and continued by [Teresa Mastracci, Ph.D.](#), and her team, provided a strong foundation for our expanded research.

During today’s seminar, leading diabetes research authority, [Mark Atkinson, Ph.D.](#), director of the University of Florida’s Diabetes Institute, spoke on "Lessons From the Human Pancreas: It’s Time to Rewrite the Textbooks on How Type 1 Diabetes Develops", while [Dr. Eizirik](#) gave a presentation on “The Crosstalk Between Candidate Genes and Innate Immunity in Type 1 Diabetes: From Basic Research to New Therapies”.

A “town hall” panel discussion on “Accelerating Science to the Patient Care Environment” included Drs. Atkinson and Eizirik, as well as [Ruth Gimeno, Ph.D.](#), vice president, Diabetes Research and Clinical Investigation, at Lilly and [Raghu Mirmira, M.D., Ph.D.](#), director of IU School of Medicine’s Diabetes Research Center. The panel was moderated by [Kylie Veleta](#), business of health reporter and special projects editor with Inside INdiana Business.

[The Indiana Biosciences Research Institute \(IBRI\)](#) is an independent, nonprofit discovery science and applied research institute currently targeting diabetes, metabolic disease, poor nutrition and related health data science. Inspired by the state and Indiana’s leading life sciences companies, research universities and philanthropic community, the IBRI is building a world-class organization of researchers, innovators and entrepreneurs to catalyze scientific discovery and its application, resulting in improved health outcomes for patients. For more information and donation or collaboration opportunities, please go to: www.indianabiosciences.org.

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