

Dr. Sarkis Mazmanian, Pioneering Medical Microbiologist in the Treatment of Diseases, Joins 11th Armenian Medical World Congress



During our lifetime, the human body is colonized with 100 trillion bacteria. The benefits to human health from this large and diverse ecosystem are still not clearly understood. Researchers are now examining how and why human beings harbor these vast numbers of symbiotic bacteria and their potential in treating diseases.

In Western countries, epidemiologic and clinical reports have shown a drastic increase in certain immune disorders including inflammatory bowel disease, asthma, type 1 diabetes and multiple sclerosis. Recent studies by Sarkis Mazmanian, PhD, and his laboratory team at the California Institute of Technology have demonstrated that symbiotic bacteria have a positive impact on the immune system, providing protection and treatment of gastrointestinal diseases.

Dr. Mazmanian, Professor of Biology at the California Institute of Technology, will speak on "Identification of Novel Probiotic Therapies for Disease from Human Gut Bacteria" at the 11th Armenian Medical World Congress in Los Angeles in July.

"Most people think of bacteria as being only harmful and the causes of infectious disease," says Dr. Mazmanian. "But bacteria can be beneficial as well, although most researchers and clinicians do not study their medical potential. Our work focuses on identifying and characterizing novel probiotic bacteria that may represent entirely new classes of therapeutics for various human disorders."

He received his doctoral training in microbiology and immunology at the University of California, Los Angeles studying the mechanism by which Gram-positive pathogens anchor surface protein adhesins during bacterial infection. In addition, at Harvard Medical School he was a Helen Hay Whitney Post-doctoral Fellow and an Assistant Professor of Medicine.

Dr. Mazmanian has received numerous awards including the Searle Scholarship, Young Investigator of the Year at Harvard Medical School in 2005, Damon Runyon Innovation Award, WM Keck Foundation Research Excellence Award, and in 2008 was named by Discover Magazine as one of the "Best Brains in Science under 40." In 2012, Dr. Mazmanian was one of only 23 people to receive the distinguished MacArthur Fellowship, also known as the Genius Grant, for his ground-breaking research of beneficial microbes. His research has led to the discovery of novel drug candidates that are being developed as pharmaceuticals for the treatment of inflammatory bowel disease and multiple sclerosis.

"Dr. Mazmanian's discoveries have shed light on the key interactions between the environment and the human microbiome," states Raffi Tachdjian, MD, Organizing Committee Member of the 11th Armenian Medical World Congress. "His work should pave the way for scientists to formulate novel approaches to treating and preventing various inflammatory conditions."

Advanced registration for the 11th Armenian Medical World Congress ends on March 30, 2013. For more information and to register please visit our website at www.aamsc.com/congress.