

**2009 Salivary Glands and Exocrine Secretion Gordon Research Conference
Summary of Scientific Conference – Report to The Office of Rare Diseases Research
R13-DE19733-01**

The 2009 Salivary Glands and Exocrine Secretion Gordon Research Conference (<http://www.grc.org/programs.aspx?year=2009&program=salivary>) was supported by funds from the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR), the Office of Rare Diseases Research (ORDR) and the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK). The conference was held at the Hotel Galvez in Galveston, Texas, on February 8-13, 2009. Over 120 researchers were in attendance, including approximately 20% junior scientists, 20% women (with a higher percentage for presenters) and 15% international scientists. There were 38 oral and 60 poster presentations. The meeting, which attracted a multi-disciplinary, international audience, promoted and advanced the exchange of new ideas for the prevention, detection, diagnosis, and treatment of the pathologies associated with exocrine gland disorders. The 2009 conference focused on autoimmune exocrinopathies that include disorders of the salivary glands, pancreas and eye. Thus, the 2009 conference has a broader approach and seeks to identify the underlying and common etiology of abnormal secretory functions in several organs. As such, the 2009 conference was unique, and was also a deviation from the themes of previous GRC in this series.

The overall theme for the conference was to identify common mechanisms in the physiology and pathophysiology shared by salivary glands with the other major exocrine glands. The rationale is that exploiting the relative strengths of the global exocrine biology community will yield information important to the ultimate development of diagnostics and therapeutics for exocrine pathologies. Thus, the goal of the conference was to encourage experienced salivary researchers to form collaborations with investigators in complementary fields, including basic, translational and clinical researchers. The accomplished aims of the proposed conference include: 1) presented cutting-edge, unpublished research in a variety of areas relevant to salivary gland and exocrine gland research; 2) stimulated discussion and promote interactions between investigators working in different, but related, exocrine gland models; 3) identified emerging fields and prioritized future areas of research emphasis; 4) encouraged new investigators to study the salivary gland and other exocrine glands; 5) encouraged networking between experienced exocrine gland biologists and new investigators; 6) stimulated collaborations between basic, translational and clinical researchers.

The program consisted of nine oral sessions (including two keynote lectures), and two poster sessions. NIDCR Program Staff was in attendance, engaged with researchers regarding funding opportunities at the NIH and overall research priorities. Staff observed that there were broad and stimulating discussions among investigators in both oral and poster sessions. There was ample time for social and informal scientific interactions. These included an opening and closing reception, common meals, and unscheduled afternoons. Staff was able to gain a comprehensive understanding of the state of the science and to identify scientific gaps and opportunities, which may result in the development of research initiatives relating to exocrine gland biology and pathology. The conference organizers solicited feedback from the attendees regarding the content and quality of this conference and have received outstanding accolades. There are definite plans for continuation of this series in the future. The GRC series do not publish proceedings for their conferences. However, new discoveries unveiled during the conference will undoubtedly be published in peer-reviewed journals in the future.