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Pharmacy Graduate Student Wins Scholarship for Alzheimer's Research

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Pharmacy Graduate Student Wins Scholarship for Alzheimer’s Research

Award allows Purnendu Sharma to present results to experts in the field

APRIL 5, 2018 BY **WHITNEY TARPY**

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Purnendu Sharma (left), a UM graduate student in pharmaceuticals, discusses his research with S. Narasimha Murthy, his adviser. UM photo by Sydney Slotkin DuPriest

OXFORD, Miss. – Purnendu Sharma, a fourth-year Ph.D. student in the **University of Mississippi School of Pharmacy’s** Department of Pharmaceutics and Drug Delivery, received an Alzheimer’s Drug Discovery Foundation Young Investigator Scholarship for his research on the natural product resiniferatoxin, or RTX

Sharma’s project, titled “Effect of Resiniferatoxin, a TrpV1 Receptor Agonist on Neuronal Cells and evaluating it In vitro Neurotrophic Activity for Neurodegenerative Disorders,” showed the potential of RTX to help

in the treatment of diseases such as Alzheimer’s.

ADDF is one of the most prominent nonprofit organizations in the world that provides funding to scientists conducting innovative Alzheimer’s disease drug research. The scholarship allowed Sharma, originally from Hyderabad, India, to attend ADDF’s 12th annual Drug Discovery for Neurodegeneration Conference in Washington, D.C., in February and present his research poster.

“This award is a great recognition,” Sharma said. “Being able to present to and interact with experts on this subject and receive feedback will have a great impact on this research and my career.”

Sharma works under the supervision of S. Narasimha Murthy, professor of pharmaceuticals in the School of Pharmacy. He also had collaborative support from Babu L. Tekwani, principal scientist in the National Center for Natural Products Research, as RTX is a chemical found in a cactus-like plant in Morocco and Nigeria.

“Purnendu is a highly-focused and hard-working student,” Murthy said. “He was very deserving of this award for his novel findings on neurotrophic activity of nanoformulations of resiniferatoxin. I am confident that Purnendu will have a successful career as a pharmaceutical scientist.”

Sharma’s work on other projects, including evaluating the microstructure of topical creams, has been recognized by the FDA and American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists, Murthy added.

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