

First AAP/SUNSTAR Innovation **Grant recipient** announced



At the 102nd Annual Meeting held in September, AAP Past President Dr. Wayne Aldredge announced the SUNSTAR Foundation's commitment to pledge \$250,000 to the AAP for six research grants to be awarded over a three-year period beginning in 2017.

This new grant program, open to all AAP members, was formalized in a signing ceremony held prior to the Opening General Session. At the ceremony, Dr. Aldredge signed on behalf of the Academy, and Ms. Mayumi Kaneda signed on behalf of SUNSTAR.

The first grant recipient, chosen in January, is Yvonne Kapila, DDS, PhD, of the University of California at San Francisco. Dr. Kapila's study aims to lay the foundation for the potential use of pre- or probiotics containing nisin or nisin-secreting bacteria in promoting the maintenance of a healthy oral microbiome and preventing the formation of pathogenic biofilms associated with periodontal disease.

According to Dr. Kapila, "There are many important reasons for exploring nisin's potential in this capacity. Nisin is a naturally occurring bacteriocin produced by several *Lactococcus* and *Streptococcus* species that

are endemic to the oral and gut microflora. Nisin is present in human milk and in dairy milk produced commercially. Nisin has been used safely worldwide for years as a food preservative, and is approved by the WHO and FDA."

Additionally, she added, "Nisin and nisin-expressing bacteria have been used successfully to treat infections associated with drug-resistant pathogens, gastrointestinal infections, respiratory tract infections, skin and soft tissue infections, mastitis, head and neck cancers, and other oral diseases using in vitro and in vivo models. Thus, the current study is an important next step in exploring nisin's potential role as an oral pre-biotic given its long history of safety and broad range of biomedical applications.

Dr. Kapila also commented on how the grant will impact her work, "This grant will allow our team of clinicians and scientists to explore, for the first time, nisin's effects on oral biofilm composition



Yvonne Kapila, DDS, PhD

The SUNSTAR logo, consisting of the word 'SUNSTAR' in white, uppercase, sans-serif font, centered within a dark teal rectangular background.

using both in vitro and in vivo model systems. This initial data will be foundational for the translation of nisin or other similar bacteriocins, as biofilm modifiers that may serve as pre-biotics for health promotion and disease prevention. Without the support from the AAP/SUNSTAR Innovation Grant, this type of initial scientific inquiry would not be possible.”

Dr. Kapila will present the work she’s completed at a future AAP Annual Meeting.

Are you interested in submitting your research proposal to be considered for the next AAP/SUNSTAR Innovation Grant? Applications will be accepted in fall 2017. For more information, contact Scientific Affairs Manager Stephanie Heffner (telephone **800-282-4867** ext. **3248** or **312-573-3248** or email **stephanie@perio.org**). ■



Left to right: Ms. Mayumi Kaneda (founder and CEO, SUNSTAR Foundation) and Dr. Wayne Aldredge (AAP president, 2016)



AAP and SUNSTAR leadership at the SUNSTAR Innovation Grant signing ceremony