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Jennifer Zallen Selected as Early Career Scientist By Howard Hughes Medical Institute



Research

Wednesday, July 1, 2009

Summary

Alumni

Jennifer A. Zallen, a member of the Developmental Biology Program in the Sloan Kettering Institute, has been selected by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) as an Early Career Scientist.

[Jennifer A. Zallen](#), a member of the [Developmental Biology Program](#) in the [Sloan Kettering Institute](#), has been selected by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) as an Early Career Scientist. This new honor, bestowed for the first time on 50 researchers across the United States, includes a six-year appointment to HHMI and research support to freely investigate the best scientific ideas without concern for finding money to fund the experiments.



Jennifer A. Zallen

The program provides each recipient with full salary, benefits, and a research budget of \$1.5 million over the six-year appointment span. It will also cover other expenses, including research space and the purchase of critical equipment.

Dr. Zallen investigates how cells in a developing organism coordinate their movements to define the shape and structure of tissues and organs. This complex process, called morphogenesis, relies on precise communication among cells. In addition to providing a better understanding of how cell rearrangements are organized during normal development, these studies may also shed light on the renegade cell movements that lead to tumor cell metastasis. To gain insights into the mechanisms driving this process, Dr. Zallen studies fruit fly embryos, which take less than two hours to double in length and narrow in width to create the basic layout of their body plan. She uses live imaging combined with three-dimensional models to analyze how such large-scale cell movement is orchestrated.