



Male Contraceptive Initiative
811 Ninth Street, Suite 120 #255
Durham, NC 27705
984.464.2951

Title: Male Contraceptive Initiative Fellowship Program - 2021

Funding Announcement: 2021-AB

Posted Date: February 1st, 2021

Open Date: February 1st, 2021

Application Due Date: April 16th, 2021

Intended Start Date: August 1st, 2021

Section I: Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose: The Male Contraceptive Initiative Fellowship Program offers support for up to two years for graduate and postdoctoral trainees, in the United States and abroad, focusing on projects related to the research and development of male contraceptives. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, areas of basic science, target characterization, and male contraceptive discovery and development.

Background: Worldwide, nearly half of all pregnancies are unintended. Furthermore, current contraceptive options do not adequately meet the needs of users who desire contraception. Male Contraceptive Initiative (MCI), a US-based 501(c)3 nonprofit, is a funding agency and advocate for male contraceptive solutions that are effective, safe, and reversible. MCI has supported over \$5M in direct research funding globally.

Section II: Eligibility requirements

Applicants must be either pursuing a PhD or employed as a postdoctoral trainee with a research focus applicable to male contraception.

Applicants need not be citizens of the United States. Applicants must be sponsored by a principal investigator who is affiliated full-time with an accredited academic institution, has ongoing research activity involving male contraception, and agrees to supervise the applicant's training.

Institutions need not be in the United States. Eligible institutions include accredited domestic and foreign non-profit institutions, public and private universities, colleges, foundations, and hospitals.

Section III: Fields of study

This application is open to all projects relevant to the development of male contraceptives. This includes, but is not limited to, the research and development of male contraceptives, basic science of male contraceptive targets, and tools that are broadly applicable to the development of male contraceptives.

Acceptable fields of study include, but are not limited to, molecular and cell biology, andrology, reproductive biology, pharmacology and toxicology, medicinal chemistry, structural biology, developmental biology, endocrinology, and public health. Potential applicants are encouraged to contact MCI for questions regarding eligibility.

Applicants focusing on the development of male contraceptives are encouraged to submit projects aligned with MCI Research Priority Areas, which include the following:

- Approaches that target the post-meiotic phase of spermatogenesis
- Approaches that target sperm functions required for normal fertilization, such as sperm motility and the acrosome reaction
- Approaches that target post-testicular processes required for fertility, including epididymal maturation and sperm transport in the excurrent ducts
- Other approaches that could lead to fast-acting, reversible male contraceptives
- Approaches with the potential to result in Multipurpose Prevention Technology (MPT) products that act against sexually transmitted infections

Applications in the following areas are considered outside of MCI interests and will not be reviewed:

- Development of male contraceptives involving the exogenous administration of steroid hormones
- Approaches that induce active immunity
- Male or female condom development
- Contraceptives with a proposed female delivery system
- Approaches that permanently inhibit fertility

Section IV: Period and number of fellowships

MCI Fellows will receive support for up to two years, with second year renewal contingent on submission and approval of a progress report, as well as availability of funds. Fellows are

expected to secure any additional funding necessary in the post-project period. Multiple fellowships are expected to be awarded in relation to this announcement.

Section V: Application procedure

Application Documents A-D must be submitted by April 16, 2021 to fellowships@malecontraceptive.org as a single PDF, formatted in Arial 11 point font on 8.5 x 11 inch pages with one inch margins.

Letters of Support must be submitted by April 16, 2021, directly to fellowships@malecontraceptive.org by the letter writer with the subject line "CANDIDATE NAME - Letter of Support."

Section VI: Application documents

A. Project Narrative - (6 pages maximum, including figures and references)

The plan for the project should concisely describe the present state of knowledge as it relates to the proposed project, as well as the importance, scope, specific aims, and objectives of the proposed work to be performed. Include figures when necessary. Please include the applicant and sponsoring principal investigator(s) name, title, institution, and contact information.

Successful applications will include a specific hypothesis and subsequent objectives, as well as sufficient details on the approach, methods, and techniques the applicant will use to achieve objectives.

Expected outcomes should be listed in detail, and measured by specific quarterly benchmarks. Benchmarks should be specific and clear in how progress will be demonstrated. Timelines are to be presented in a written format that details specific activities performed during each quarterly period, as well as displayed visually in a format similar to the following example.

	2021		2022				2023		
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Specific Aim 1									
Objective 1.1									
Objective 1.2									
Specific Aim 2									
Objective 2.1									
Objective 2.2									
Objective 2.3									
Specific Aim 3									
Objective 3.1									
Objective 3.2									
Objective 3.3									

B. Applicant CV - (4 pages maximum)

C. Suggested Reviewers - (1/2 page maximum)

Please list five Principal Investigators who are experts in a field of study relevant to the proposed work, who are not current or recent (past 3 years) collaborators of the applicant or sponsoring PI, and who do not have direct personal or professional interest in the applicant's training or career. Include email addresses. Representatives of any institutional unit that stands to receive financial benefit from a fellowship are not considered independent reviewers. Reviewers from outside the applicant's institution are preferred.

D. Institutional Representation

This section provides information concerning the institution's eligibility to receive grants under U.S. tax laws and approvals of the project by reviewing bodies. Please consult

with your institutional Sponsored Projects Office or equivalent for further information as to what may be included in this section.

E. Letters of Support

MCI requires two letters of support: One sponsor/mentor letter and one letter of reference from an expert in the field of study. These are to be submitted directly by the letter writer to fellowships@malecontraceptive.org with the subject line "CANDIDATE NAME - Letter of Support."

The following letters must be received by the application deadline.

- i. Sponsor/mentor letter of support: This letter must outline, in lay terms, the relevance of the project to the MCI Fellowship Program; the training and experiences during the project that will assist the fellow to apply successfully for continued funding and to progress towards independence; and the ability of the fellow to carry out the proposed project. NOTE: If there will be more than one sponsor/mentor, the sponsors may collaborate to produce a single letter, signed by both sponsors, which includes details of how coordination of supervision will be carried out.
- ii. Letter of reference: The applicant must solicit one letter of reference from someone other than the project sponsor/mentor who is an expert in the field of study and who is not a current or recent (past 3 years) collaborator of the applicant or sponsoring PI. Examples include published authors in the field of study, or experts whose work is cited as foundational in the submitted proposal. Letter writers should be provided with a copy of the final version of the application sufficiently in advance of the application deadline. Applicants are encouraged to speak with their advisor(s) to identify potential letter writers. Representatives of any institutional unit that stands to receive financial benefit from a fellowship are not considered appropriate references. Representatives from outside the applicant's institution are preferred.

Section VII: Screening and notification

Fellowships will be awarded on the basis of the applicant's previous experience, academic record, the caliber of the proposed research, and the quality of the mentor, training program, and environment, as well as the relevance of the proposal to the future development and/or introduction of a male contraceptive as evaluated by at least one external reviewer and the MCI Research Committee. Location in a department that will provide a stimulating research environment is an additional factor that will be considered in evaluating applicants.

The applicant's professional ability and promise for a research career in male contraceptive research will be highly prioritized in the evaluation of proposals, and will be assessed on the basis of the letters of recommendation, career plans, prior clinical and research training, academic transcripts, and the mentor's endorsement.

Applications by members of underrepresented minorities are strongly encouraged. Final decisions are made by the MCI Board of Directors.

Applicants will be notified of award acceptance on or after May 31st, with an expected award start date of August 1, 2021, pending institutional approval.

Section VIII: Fellowship details

Fellowships are \$50,000 USD per year for coverage of tuition (if required), fellowship stipend, and fringe benefits such as healthcare. Other expenses, including facilities & administrative costs (F&A) are not allowed. No additional familial support is available.

Fellowships are intended to cover two years of support. Continuation of funding beyond one year is contingent upon satisfactory progress and availability of funds. Under no circumstances is any part of the fellowship transferable to other persons or items. Applicants with projects that may not conform specifically to programmatic guidelines are asked to contact MCI with more details before submitting an application.

Section IX: Notices

The fellowship grant is restricted to the period indicated in the Grant Letter provided during the award process. Extension/reduction of the granted period may be considered with written request. The invitation is limited only to the successful applicant specified in the Grant Letter.

The application is not to be considered confidential. Applicants wishing to disclose confidential information may contact the appropriate MCI administrator for details.

Section X: Conditions of Fellowship

Sponsored Projects Offices or other institutional representatives must agree to the stipulations in the Terms of Agreement issued upon award acceptance.

Fellows are responsible for submitting a yearly Progress Report 30 days before the one-year mark of award issue. Progress Reports are to be sent to fellowships@malecontraceptive.org. It

is to be in PDF format, using 11 point Arial or Times Roman font and with at least 0.5 inch margins. The Progress Report will be a confidential document. It is to include:

Accomplishments (two pages maximum):

- What were the major goals and objectives of the project for the current year and what was accomplished toward these goals?
- What were the benchmarks for the current year, were they met, and what is the evidence of successful research progress?
- Were there problems or delays or changes to original goals and objectives that require modification of research plans?

Progress Reports will be evaluated by the MCI Research Committee and used to determine continuation of funding. Awardees may be contacted for clarifications if questions arise during review. Continuation of funding beyond one year is contingent upon satisfactory progress and availability of funds.

A final Progress Report will be due no later than 30 days after the end of the award to fellowships@malecontraceptive.org. It is to be in PDF format, using 11 point Arial or Times Roman font and with at least 0.5 inch margins. The final Progress Report will be a confidential document. It is to include:

Accomplishments (two pages maximum):

- What were the major goals and objectives of the project for the final year and what was accomplished toward these goals?
- What were the benchmarks for the current year, were they met, and what is the evidence of successful research progress?
- What were the overall goals of the project and what was accomplished?
- What are future directions for the research, and are there plans or avenues to carry it out?
- What did this fellowship mean for your career advancement, and what are your current long-term plans?

Fellows may also be required to perform short, unstructured updates via phone, digital video service, or email. Sufficient notice will be provided by MCI for these updates.

Fellows may be asked to participate in promotional efforts by MCI, which may include interviews, outreach, and other publicity. These efforts will be voluntary, and will not impact the terms of the fellowship.

MCI is required to publish a list of grantees on their website. Fellows and a short biography may be included in this information.

Section XI: Contact

Questions about eligibility, the application, and application process are encouraged. Please contact:

Logan Nickels
Research Director

Male Contraceptive Initiative
811 Ninth Street, Suite 120 #255
Durham, NC 27705

logan@malecontraceptive.org
405-714-2083