

Arkaitz Carracedo and Fàtima Crispi, winners of the Fundació Jesús Serra Research Awards for their contribution to research on diet and nutrition

In this fourth edition, the awards recognise research in cancer and maternal-foetal medicine, further revealing the importance of food and nutrition in the prevention and treatment of diseases. The award-winning researchers will receive a prize of 35,000 euros each to support their scientific projects.

Arkaitz Carracedo, Ikerbasque researcher at the CIC bioGUNE, and Fàtima Crispi, specialist doctor at the Centre for Maternal-Foetal Medicine (BCNatal) of Hospital Clínic de Barcelona and the Hospital Sant Joan de Déu, have been awarded the 2022 Fundació Jesús Serra Research Awards in the basic and clinical research categories, respectively. At this fourth edition, the Fundació Jesús Serra of Grupo Catalana Occidente once more recognises the work and projects of two young researchers working at the crossroads of diet, nutrition and health.

Arkaitz Carracedo received the award for his pioneering studies on the metabolic basis of prostate cancer and, specifically, on the effects that molecules called polyamines can have on the development of tumours or other diseases such as obesity.

Fàtima Crispi received the award for her research on the foetal development of babies with low birthweight, which is associated with a high perinatal morbi-mortality, and also has consequences on the cardiovascular health of these future children and adults. Based on a diet intervention involving pregnant women, Crispi and her team were able to reduce by 30% the number of babies with low birthweight, as well as the associated cardiovascular damage.

The names of the award winners were revealed yesterday in Madrid at the ceremony of the Fundació Jesús Serra Research Awards, which was led by Federico Halpern, the foundation's president, and which featured the award winners and the members of the prestigious jury for these awards. Television personality Jorge Fernández directed this ceremony, which, under the title "Feeding health is everyone's business", focused on the need to continue researching the effect of diet and nutrient metabolism on the development of diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular diseases and obesity.

About Fundació Jesús Serra

Fundación Jesús Serra is a non-profit organization created in memory of Jesús Serra Santamans, a well-known businessman and sponsor and founder of Grupo Catalana Occidente. The Foundation develops and supports projects in the areas of research, education, business, social action, sports, and promotion of the arts, with the common goal of a responsible commitment to society.

After the awards ceremony, the second part of the event featured science communicator Pere Estupinyà, who had gathered some questions at street level for the two winners. With these contributions, the Fundació Jesús Serra also wants to shine a light on the importance of having the public know about this research so it can adopt healthier habits and learn how to prevent or better manage diseases through diet.

The Fundació Jesús Serra Research Awards

The dual goals of the Fundació Jesús Serra Research Awards, which are worth €35,000 in each category, are to encourage research in the field of diet and nutrition, and to support young researchers who are spearheading pioneering projects in this field.

For the first time in this fourth edition, the eligible researchers could be over 45 years of age - which had previously been the age limit for candidates - if they temporarily interrupted their career as a result of the birth or adoption of children. This way, the Fundació Jesús Serra reaffirms its commitment to gender equality, facilitating work-life balance and ensuring equal opportunities for all individuals.

The chairman of the Fundació Jesús Serra, Federico Halpern, explained at the opening of the ceremony that "we should all support research as much as we can, since it has an unparalleled transformative potential". The Fundació Jesús Serra Research Awards have been presented annually since 2018. In Halpern's words, "this initiative consolidates many of our values as a Foundation. We support the best research talent in our country in order to continue exploring the many ways in which diet and nutrition can improve our health. Thanks to this research, we will be able to improve the health and well-being of a large number of people".

For this 4th edition, 54 candidates were nominated, 19 in the basic research category and 35 in the clinical research category. "The quality of the candidates is exceptional. And that includes women, since 35 of the 54 candidates were women researchers", explained María Blasco, director of the Centro Nacional de Investigaciones Oncológicas (National Cancer Research Centre, CNIO) and president of the jury of the Fundació Jesús Serra Research Awards. Blasco also noted the diversity of the candidates. "Throughout its first four editions, these awards have recognised researchers who are experts in nutrition, but also cardiologists, oncologists, biologists and gynaecologists. And I'm sure that the list of specialists will continue to grow", she added.

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The jury for these awards is made up of prestigious Spanish researchers and includes, in addition to researcher María Blasco; Lina Badimón, Director of the Catalan Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences (ICCC-CSIC); Dr Carlos Mayaca, who recently retired as the Director of the Cardiology Department at the Clinical Hospital San Carlos in Madrid and Chairman of the FEC (Spanish Heart Foundation); and Pedro Mata, Chairman and founder of the Spanish Foundation of Familial Hypercholesterolaemia. Rounding out this year's jury were the three winners of the 3rd edition of the Fundación Jesús Serra Research Awards: Maria Carmen Collado, from the Institute of Agrochemistry and Food Technology (IATA-CSIC); Borja Ibáñez, researcher at the National Centre for Cardiovascular Research (CNIC) and cardiologist at the Fundación Jiménez Díaz; and Rubén Nogueiras, researcher at the Centre for Research in Molecular Medicine and Chronic Diseases (CIMUS) and a professor at the University of Santiago de Compostela. (USC).

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