

NEWS RELEASE

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Nov. 9, 2005

NC State Receives Funding to Develop New Drug-Discovery Methods

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A North Carolina State University researcher has received a \$747,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to launch a research project devoted to helping scientists discover new drugs more efficiently.

Dr. Jacqueline Hughes-Oliver, professor of statistics in the College of Physical and Mathematical Sciences, was awarded the grant to lead efforts in developing statistical and computational methods to identify compounds that may be developed into medicines.



Dr. Jacqueline Hughes-Oliver

Being able to model relationships between chemical structure and activity creates an important shortcut in the normally time- and labor-intensive drug-discovery process. Instead of trial and error, scientists can use computer modeling to determine more quickly what chemicals hold promise for use in disease-treating medications.

This increase in efficiency would allow scientists to develop drugs more quickly, and increase the number of drugs being considered at a given time.

Because this process would be quicker and cheaper than conventional drug discovery, it may also lead to decreased costs that may be passed on to patients. More importantly, it would make drug-discovery efforts for rare diseases more cost-effective for pharmaceutical companies to pursue.

“This effort is the newest example of our department’s 64-year commitment to interdisciplinary research,” said Dr. Sastry Pantula, head of the Department of Statistics. “This initiative will bring chemists and computer scientists together with statisticians to work as a team on important scientific problems.”

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Other NC State faculty members involved in the research include Dr. Morteza Khaledi of the chemistry department, Dr. Robert Funderlic of the computer science department, and Dr. Gary Howell of the information technology department.

The work is funded by the National Institutes of Health through the NIH Roadmap for Medical Research, Grant 1 P20 HG003900-01. Information of the Molecular Libraries Roadmap Initiative can be obtained from <http://nihroadmap.nih.gov/molecularlibraries/>.