Flora Tassone, Ph.D.

Tassone, Flora, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Medicine; Investigator, UC Davis MIND Institute, University of California, Davis

Education

B.S., Biology, University of Rome, 1983
Med Genetic, Medical Genetics, University of Rome, 1988
Ph.D., Molecular Biology, Catholic University of Rome, 1992

Biography

Dr. Flora Tassone received her B.S. degree in biology from the University of Rome "La Sapienza" and her Ph.D. from the University of Rome UCSC in 1992. She is a Professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Medicine, and a MIND Institute investigator at the University of California, Davis, School of Medicine. She is a molecular geneticist with a specialty in gene transcriptional and translational regulation and has carried out a significant work on the molecular characterization and mechanisms involved in neurodevelopmental disorders including Fragile X syndrome and associated disorders, Autism spectrum disorders and 22q deletion syndrome. She has years of experience in genomic, gene and protein expression and translational regulation particularly related to the FMR1 gene. Of importance, she has reported on the molecular structure and function of the *FMR1* gene for over 20 years and specifically on premutation and full mutation alleles particularly related to methylation, mosaicism, expression, and instability. She has made a number of important observations related to the FMR1 protein expression and to the mechanism of gene expression of the *FMR1* gene, especially regarding the effects of expanded transcripts (55-200 CGG repeats) in premutation carriers. Her most significant work led to the important discovery of gene dysregulation (increased mRNA activity) among premutation carriers. This discovery has provided the molecular basis for the forms of clinical involvement among carriers, including fragile X-associated tremor/ataxia syndrome (FXTAS), which was described in 2001 by her team.

She has also been involved in research aimed to the identification of susceptibility genes, genomic changes and mitochondrial dysfunction in autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Importantly, for the past few years her Laboratory has been involved in developing molecular biomarkers to monitor disease progression and determine efficacy to drug response, including sertraline, ganaxolone, minocycline, lovastatin, metformin and several mGluR5 antagonists in children and adolescent with FXS. Indeed, she has reported on the development of molecular biomarkers, in both FXS and ASD, for monitoring disease severity and response to target treatments (Minocycline, Ganaxolone, Sertraline, Lovastatin).

Dr. Tassone is the director of the Molecular Core of a Fragile X project and her laboratory provides the molecular support to a number of projects at the MIND Institute, as well as at the University of California, Davis. Dr. Tassone has extensive experience in medical genetics and clinical analysis. She has been granted multiple fellowships and

training opportunities, as well as research awards from NIH, the National Fragile X Foundation, and UC Davis Health System for her outstanding contributions to the field. Dr. Tassone is well known in the international Fragile X community; her work has been presented internationally and she has published extensively on the molecular aspect of both Fragile X and FXTAS and autism.

Publications

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