

Yoon-Hee Cha, MD, Receives Early Career Distinguished Investigator Award

Yoon-Hee K. Cha, MD, has been named the recipient of the **Early Career Distinguished Investigator Award** from the [MdDS Balance Disorder Foundation](#) in acknowledgement of research activities regarding Mal de Debarquement Syndrome (MdDS). This award recognizes investigators at the beginning of their careers. Based on educational background and training and quality of initial independent research productivity, these individuals are likely to make significant contributions to basic or clinical understanding of the cause and/or treatment of MdDS.



Dr. Cha is a Clinical Instructor in the [Department of Neurology](#) at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) where she has recently completed her advanced clinical training in Neuro-Otology. She received a BS degree from Stanford University prior to her MD from the Mayo Medical School. Dr. Cha completed her medical internship at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston and residency in Neurology at the University of California at San Francisco. While in training at UCLA, Dr. Cha initiated research studies on MdDS under the direction of Robert Baloh, MD, Professor of Neurology and the Program Director of Neuro-Otology. Results derived from these studies have recently been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Neurology*.

The [UCLA Department of Neurology](#) was founded by Augustus S. Rose, MD, in the 1950's in the UCLA School of Medicine and is a component of the [UCLA Center for the Health Sciences](#). The department includes over 100 faculty and 125 trainees and is associated with seven affiliated hospitals. This academic department is dedicated to understanding the human nervous system and to improving the lives of people with neurological diseases. Clinical research activities also include Alzheimer's disease, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, and neurorehabilitation.

MdDS is a rare balance disorder that most often develops following a cruise, other type of water travel, or motion experience. MdDS persists for months to years. Common symptoms include a persistent sensation of motion such as rocking, swaying, and/or bobbing. This sensation of motion is often associated with fatigue, difficulty maintaining balance, and difficulty concentrating (impaired cognitive function). Presently, no tests provide a definitive diagnosis of MdDS; diagnosis is primarily based on patient history and the elimination of other disorders that may have similar symptoms. There is no known cure for MdDS and the cause is unknown.

The [MdDS Balance Disorder Foundation](#) is an international non-profit organization dedicated to promoting awareness of MdDS as well as to encouraging research directed towards a better understanding of the dysfunction that underlies this disorder.