



*life*

Dear Colleagues

We are pleased to announce the winner of the *Life* 2021 PhD Thesis Award, which recognizes the scientific relevance of studies carried out by the most talented and motivated PhD students around the world.

The inaugural *Life* award for outstanding thesis, in recognition of his scientific creativity and contributions to biosciences, has been granted to Dr. Brayon Fremin (Stanford University, USA). He will receive CHF 800 and a certificate. In his PhD thesis, Dr. Fremin developed original ideas and methods for profiling RNA expression in the microbiome. The results—generated by concepts developed independently by Dr. Fremin himself while he was a PhD student—are attracting considerable attention (> 100 citations) after being published in the most well-reputed journals. The procedures used were highly original, and identification of what genes are expressed, and novel open reading frames, of the microbiome should have a huge impact on understanding how the microbiome influences many disease states. His advisor, Dr. Bhatt, states “I have never met a more creative and pioneering translational scientist in my entire career”. We look forward to reading about Dr. Fremin’s many scientific accomplishments to come.

Honorable Mentions

In addition to the winner, the award committee would also like to specifically recognize the impressive contributions of two other candidates, who are distinguished by the passion, dedication, and talent they bring to their projects, and for the importance of the impressive results their hard work has yielded.

*\*Soukaina El Amrani Zerrifi\** (Cadi Ayyad University, Morocco) is recognized for her outstanding accomplishments and the impact of her work for the environment and bio-technological development of her country. In her thesis work, she isolated and identified multiple products from both seaweeds and bacteria that hold great potential for combatting cyanobacterial blooms.

*\*Carina Isabel Coelho Proença\** (University of Porto, Portugal) is recognized for her impressive productivity and the impact of her work on the field, as reflected by over 190 citations of publications arising from her PhD work. Her research investigated the potential application of flavonoids targeting several diabetes-related enzymes as novel therapeutics. This large body of work generated nine highly cited papers with Dr. Proença as lead author.

On behalf of the evaluation committee and of the journal Editorial Office, we congratulate the winner on his exceptional accomplishments. We would like to thank all the applicants for submitting their diverse and fascinating range of research topics. All of the submitted applications demonstrated the motivation, hard work, and dedication to science of every candidate at a highest level, and we take the opportunity to wish everyone the best as they develop upon their exciting careers.

2021 PHD AWARD  
WINNER