IBRO-Dargut and Milena Kemali Foundation

Press Release

20 September 2021. The IBRO Dargut and Milena Kemali Foundation is pleased to announce that **Sergiu P. Pasca, MD**, has been awarded the ***2022 IBRO-Dargut and Milena Kemali International Prize for Research in the field of Basic and Clinical Sciences*** "in recognition of his innovative research work using stem cell technology to create human brain organoids and assembloids, and their application to realistic studies of cellular mechanisms of human brain development and disease mechanisms."

"Dr. Pasca's visionary research and discoveries in basic neuroscience have helped to improve human cellular models of the brain and develop new understanding of the molecular mechanisms underlying disease. The IBRO-Kemali Prize honors his achievements and highlights the great importance of his work for the future of brain research."

- Dr. Pierre Magistretti, President, IBRO Dargut and Milena Kemali Foundation

Dr. Pasca is a tenured Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, the *Bonnie Uytengsu and Family* Director of Stanford Brain Organogenesis and a Stanford Bio-X faculty member at Stanford University in the United States. He is also a New York Stem Cell Foundation Robertson Investigator and a Chan Zuckerberg Initiative Ben Barres Investigator. He has received several honors during his career including the Joseph Altman Award in Developmental Neuroscience by the Japanese Neuroscience Society (2021), the Judson Daland Prize from the American Philosophical Society (2021), the Vilcek Prize for Creative Biomedical Promise (2018) and recognition as a *Nature Medicine*'s Featured Physician-Scientists (2019).

As a medical student in Romania, Dr. Pasca used biochemistry and genetics to explore gene-environment interactions in patients with neurodevelopmental disorders. The challenges associated with studying neural tissue from patients led him to recognize the promise of cellular reprogramming and prompted him to pursue basic science approaches to disease. After obtaining an IBRO Outstanding Postdoctoral Research Fellowship following his MD, he moved to Stanford Medicine where he developed some of the early models of disease using stem cell-derived neurons and uncovered the developmental and electrophysiological effects of specific mutations.

Dr. Pasca's current research seeks to understand the rules that govern the molecular and cellular steps underlying the assembly of the human brain and the molecular mechanisms that lead to disease. His team's unique research program combines rigorous *in vivo* and *in vitro* neuroscience, stem cell and molecular biology approaches to construct and deconstruct previously inaccessible stages of human brain development, degeneration and function. Dr. Pasca has been a strong advocate for broadly sharing methods with the international scientific community, and he has been

advancing the field by organizing the main research conferences and training courses in the area of human cellular models of the human brain.

The IBRO-Dargut and Milena Kemali International Prize will be awarded to Dr. Pasca during the next FENS Forum of Neuroscience in Paris, France (9-13 July 2022), where he will also give the featured IBRO-Kemali Lecture.

The IBRO Dargut and Milena Kemali International Prize for Research in the field of Basic and Clinical Neurosciences is awarded every two years (on even years) to an outstanding researcher, under the age of 45, who has made important contributions in the field of Basic or Clinical Neuroscience. The prize award is 25,000 EUR, and the winner is invited to give a featured lecture at the FENS Forum of Neuroscience, the largest international neuroscience meeting in Europe.

The IBRO Dargut and Milena Kemali Foundation for Research in Neurosciences was established to promote research in the field of Basic and Clinical Neurosciences. Founded in 1996 by Dargut Kemali, a renowned psychiatrist in Italy, and by the will of his late wife Milena Agostini Kemali, its mission is to increase, support and promote scientific interaction between and among basic and clinical research groups through its Schools and Prize.

IBRO is the global association of more than 90 scientific member organizations. Established in 1961, it aims to promote and support neuroscience around the by addressing the needs and advancing the work of individual scientists and research communities everywhere. IBRO also partners with like-minded scientific organizations to identify priorities and help bridge gaps in knowledge, investment and resources in the field of brain research.