



Human Milk
Science and
Innovation

International Conference

Alecia-Jane Twigger, Ph.D., wins the Ruth A. Lawrence Investigator Award for outstanding contributions to advancing human milk science

VIENNA, Austria, April 27, 2022 – The [International Conference on Human Milk Science and Innovation \(ICHMSI\)](#) announced today that Dr. Alecia-Jane Twigger is the fourth recipient of the Ruth A. Lawrence Investigator Award for Research in Human Milk Science.

Established by ICHMSI in 2016, the Ruth A. Lawrence Investigator Award goes to outstanding contributors advancing human milk science and breastfeeding medicine through original research. It is named in honor of Dr. Ruth A. Lawrence, MD, a pioneer in the field of lactation and breast milk.

Twigger's research, published in *Nature Communications* and titled "[Transcriptional Changes in the Mammary Gland During Lactation Revealed by Single Cell Sequencing of Cells From Human Milk](#)," was selected by an independent panel of expert judges. Twigger's research found over 110,000 viable or living cells from human milk and breast tissue, which may offer clues to the interplay between pregnancy, lactation, and breast cancer.

"As we continue to advance the scientific and clinical innovations of human milk, we rely on research such as Alecia-Jane Twigger's and are looking forward to how her findings will further our goal of raising awareness on the scientific potential and benefits of human milk," Lawrence said.

Twigger's findings may have significant implications for the industry, with her study demonstrating the power demographic factors such as age and parity have on the composition of the adult mammary gland and how this might influence long-term breast cancer risk.

"I have always been fascinated by cells in milk and think they hold the key to helping us understand human milk production," Twigger said. "This work has taken over four years to complete, but it was well worth it. I hope the findings will advance our understanding of how to optimize milk products to support long-term maternal and infant health outcomes."

Twigger will accept the award and present her research at the eighth-annual International Conference on Human Milk Science and Innovation in Vienna on June 10-11, 2022. She will also receive a \$10,000 award and travel expenses to attend the event.

Twigger is currently a research associate in the Department of Pharmacology at the University of Cambridge, Wellcome-MRC Cambridge Stem Cell Institute. She received her bachelor's degree from The University of Western Australia and received her Ph.D. in cell biology, biochemistry, and human nutrition from the School of Chemistry and Biochemistry at The University of Western Australia. Throughout her career, Twigger has been awarded several prestigious recognitions, including the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) Junior Investigator Award, the Seed Funding grant of the [UHU collaborative network](#), and a postdoctoral fellowship at Helmholtz Zentrum München, to name a few. The current research that has earned the Ruth A. Lawrence Award has also been covered in several prominent media outlets, including [Medical News Today](#), [SciTechDaily](#), and [ScienceDaily](#).

About the Ruth A. Lawrence Investigator Award for Research in Human Milk Science

Award applicants must be trainees (students, postgraduate trainees, residents, fellows) or physician/academic researchers who are within the first five years of completion of their postgraduate training. Research must be original and related to, but not limited to, one or more of the following topics:

1. Biologic activities of human milk or its components
2. Applications of human milk or its derivatives to clinical medicine
3. The impact of environment (broadly speaking) on breast milk production, lactation, or breast milk content

For complete award details, visit <http://humanmilkscience.org/award>.

The award was created by ICHMSI to pay tribute to Ruth A. Lawrence, MD. Dr. Lawrence received her medical degree from the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry at a time when few women pursued degrees in medicine. Lawrence is a founder of the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (ABM) and founder and first editor-in-chief of the ABM official journal, *Breastfeeding Medicine*. She helped establish the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at Rochester's Strong Memorial Hospital and served as the distinguished professor of neonatology, obstetrics, and gynecology at the University of Rochester Medical Center School of Medicine and Dentistry and as the medical director of the Breastfeeding and Human Lactation Study Center.

About the International Conference on Human Milk Science and Innovation

The International Conference on Human Milk Science and Innovation, sponsored by Prolacta Bioscience, is the premier forum covering the latest in scientific and clinical research related to human milk. Renowned scientists and clinicians from around the world attend this annual event to present and discuss the scientific potential of human milk and raise awareness of its clinical applicability.

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