

Canada's First Named Chair to Support Mitochondrial Research Awarded to *Top 40 Under 40* Winner
Emerging field linked to rare and more common illnesses, including bipolar disorder, diabetes, cancer

(TORONTO, NOV. 6, 2019) – The University of Toronto is pleased to announce Canada's first named chair to support research into mitochondrial research. The relationship between mitochondrial dysfunction and rare mitochondrial disease has long been known. More recent research has established links to a broad range of neurodegenerative and metabolic disorders. This is a game-changer. Unveiling how mitochondrial dysfunction is implicated in multiple diseases will transform medical diagnoses, technologies and drug delivery systems, leading to a paradigm shift in the prevention and treatment of disease.

The \$1 million *Thomas C. Zachos Chair in Mitochondrial Research* was established by Constantine and Stacy Zachos, who set out to honour their son Thomas, who lives with mitochondrial disease, and have inspired many of their friends to join in supporting this promising fundamental research. Mitochondria are critical energy-generating structures found inside most cells of the body; when they malfunction, this can disrupt major organs.

"We saw the kind of work that University of Toronto was doing and the network of researchers they helped create across the country. That kind of leadership was inspiring — and we came together to support their drive to better understand and possibly prevent these disorders," Constantine Zachos said.

Prof. Ana Andreezza has been appointed the inaugural Thomas C. Zachos Chair in Mitochondrial Research for a five-year term. In 2018, Andreezza was named one of Canada's *Top 40 under 40* for her pioneering work understanding mitochondrial dysfunction and for creating a national research network to bring this poorly understood area of medicine out of the shadows.

"As mitochondrial research continues to accelerate, a lack of infrastructure for collaboration, knowledge integration and coordinated data-sharing prevents the development of a comprehensive, big-picture understanding of this crucial and emerging area of medicine that plays a role in many diseases and spans multiple disciplines, and areas of research", says Andreezza, who is Professor in the Departments of Pharmacology & Toxicology as well as Psychiatry. She is also a collaborator scientist at CAMH, and she holds a Canada Research Chair in Molecular Pharmacology of Mood Disorders.

Andreezza has collaborated with scientists, clinicians, industry experts, the patient advocacy group MitoCanada Foundation and families across Canada to establish a national research network, the Canada Mitochondrial Network (mitoNET), where she serves as scientific director: "The data is there — what we really need now is to make the connections and develop cross-disciplinary solutions that will put the puzzle pieces together."

For more information or to arrange an interview,
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To learn about how you can help support
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