

# SWOSU and Dr. Eric Paul Receive Research Grant for Latent Viral Infections

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Southwestern Oklahoma State University Assistant Professor Dr. Eric Paul (right) receives congratulations from SWOSU Provost Dr. Blake Sonobe for receiving an \$18,000 NASA EPSCoR research initiation grant. The objective of the grant is to open doors to a radical approach to the diagnosis and treatment of latent viral infections.

Southwestern Oklahoma State University and Dr. Eric Paul, assistant professor in the SWOSU School of Allied Health, have received an \$18,000 NASA EPSCoR research initiation grant.

The grant, entitled "Use of microRNA to reduce the effects of herpesvirus reactivation during space flights," is from the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

The purpose of the grant is to provide different insights to treatment of latent viral infections such as Cytomegalovirus (CMV), which can cause diseases such as hypertension and strokes. Paul said space flights expose astronauts to tough environments and these stressors take toll on the human body, especially the immune system. Immune "dysregulation," in combination with high-energy radiation exposure, can cause the reactivation of latent viral infections including CMV.

Paul said microRNAs have shown to be involved in the regulation of the immune response and play a role in human response to viral infection. The objective of the grant is to find the microRNAs that are involved in the latency of CMV, which would open the doors to a radical approach to the diagnosis and treatment of latent viral infections.

For more information regarding the grant, please contact Dr. Paul at 580.774.3228 or by email at [eric.paul@swosu.edu](mailto:eric.paul@swosu.edu).