Reasons of the assignment of the grant support to Doct. Leila Zummo

We unanimously recommend to give that grant of the Foundation LICE to Leila Zummo, MD, and PhD student, to support her project on "The role of circulating and exosomal miRNAs as biomarkers of drug-resistant epilepsy". Drug resistant epilepsy is a common, life-shortening form of epilepsy with seizures that remain uncontrolled despite taking medication in as many as one in three persons with epilepsy.

Predicting and better understanding the mechanisms of drug resistant epilepsy is one of the most important challenges in epilepsy research. Dr. Zummo plans to examine if miRNAs, either as exosomes or circulating in plasma, have a diagnostic value or could be therapeutic biomarkers. If this would be the case this finding might allow us to predict refractory epilepsy and better understand the mechanisms of drug resistance.

MicroRNAs (or miRNAs) are small, non-coding endogenous RNAs (ribonucleic acids) that regulate gene expression Their discovery added a new dimension to the understanding of complex gene regulatory networks in humans. This is an original and a very promising project, the methods are feasible and sound, the principal goals are clearly defined.

We congratulate Dr. Zummo and wish her and her project well.

Prof. Dieter Schmidt, Berlin, Germany

Prof. Roberto Caraballo, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Prof. Antonio Gil-Nagel, Madrid, Spain

Prof. Pierre Szepetowski, Paris, France

Prof. Manjani Tripathi, New Delhi, India