

Jane and Aatos Erkko Foundation Awards over € 7 Million to Medicine and the Arts on European Day of Foundations

The Jane and Aatos Erkko Foundation has awarded a total of € 7,1 million to ten projects in medicine and the arts. *Competition for funding was exceptionally intense during this application round. The number of medical research applications was the second highest in the foundation's history, while the total amount of funding requested reached an all-time high.*

Applications in medicine were of a high standard, and funding was awarded across a broad range of research fields, including biomedicine, cancer research, medical biotechnology, and various areas of clinical medicine.

The Foundation aims to contribute to the renewal of science and support young research group leaders in building independent research careers. In this funding round, four young group leaders received funding for their own projects.

Investigating the Causes of Male Infertility

One of the young group leaders to receive funding is Renata Prunskate-Hyyryläinen of the University of Oulu. Her project will bring together, for the first time in Finland, a large research group focused on male fertility. By studying participants' genetic data, the researchers aim to identify new causes of male infertility.

The findings could help identify the causes of infertility more accurately and reduce unnecessary and burdensome treatments. The research may also generate new knowledge that could contribute to the identification of other diseases and the development of new preventive methods.

Can Skin Remember Inflammation?

A research project led by Taija Mäkinen at the University of Helsinki is investigating why chronic inflammatory skin conditions such as psoriasis often return to the same areas, even when the skin appears healthy after treatment. The researchers are exploring whether the skin and lymphatic system retain a kind of “memory” of inflammation that makes these areas more susceptible to future flare-ups.

The goal is to identify the mechanisms that sustain this inflammatory memory and use these insights to lay the groundwork for new targeted treatments. Ultimately, this research could help shift the focus of treatment from temporarily suppressing inflammation to restoring healthy tissue over the long term.

Dramaturgy Service to Support Theaters and Playwriting

UNTO – The Office for New Drama promotes Finnish playwriting and dramaturgical work. A new project will develop a nationwide dramaturgy service for theaters in response to growing demand, as fewer and fewer theaters have an in-house dramaturg.

The service will support the development of new plays and strengthen collaboration between playwrights and theaters. It will also create employment opportunities, particularly for young dramaturgs. The goal is to establish the service as a permanent part of Finland’s theater sector.

In addition, the project will launch an international staged-reading festival to be held every two years, showcasing new Finnish and international plays.

Today, October 1, European Day of Foundations is celebrated across Europe. Foundations are major funders of science, the arts, and civic activities in Finland. Last year, Finnish grant-making foundations and funds awarded a total of € 630 million to these fields. In 2025, the Jane and Aatos Erkko Foundation awarded €38.4 million in grants.

The grants announced today are listed in the appendix to this press release and are also available on the Foundation’s website at www.jaes.fi.

For more information:

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