



Fondazione
Francesco della Valle
PER LA RICERCA E LE CONOSCENZE
SULLA NEUROINFIAMMAZIONE

Call for Applications for

"EXCELLENCE IN NEUROINFLAMMATION" AWARD 2026

**WITH A THEMATIC FOCUS ON
NEUROINFLAMMATION MECHANISMS IN PAIN**

Submission deadline for applications: **January 31, 2026**

For further information:

<https://francescodellavalle.foundation/>

Email: fondazione@dellavalle.info

1. General call description

The Francesco della Valle Foundation purpose is to pursue the promotion of scientific research in the medical and biology field, with particular reference to neuroinflammation, both at a central and peripheral level. To this aim, the Foundation is issuing the "**Excellence in Neuroinflammation Award**" to recognize the remarkable and outstanding scientific publications by Young Researchers (under the age of 40) in the field of **neuroinflammation mechanisms in pain**. Within the aforementioned aim, studies focused on neuroinflammation mechanisms in the generation / maintenance / augmentation / resolution of pain of any nature (e.g., inflammatory, neuropathic, nociplastic) and type (e.g., central, visceral or somatic pain) and its comorbidities will be considered. The award is designed as a form of support and encouragement for researchers at the early stage of their career. The name of the awardee will be formally announced at the "Francesco della Valle Foundation" website and the 2026 Excellence in Neuroinflammation meeting.

2. Excellence in Neuroinflammation 2026 Award call

An award of EUR 3,000.00 will be granted to the best original research article published or accepted for publication between January 1st, 2025, and December 31st, 2025. The awardee will be notified by the end of May and will be invited to present his/her work at the 2026 Excellence in Neuroinflammation Meeting to be held next autumn in Italy.

3. Eligibility

The application must fulfil the following criteria:

- 3.1 Author: Young Researcher (under the age of 40 at the time of submitting the application) of any nationality who is the first or co-first author.
- 3.2 Publication: Original research article published, or accepted for publication, in international peer reviewed and PubMed indexed Journals, between January 1st, 2025 and December 31st, 2025. A review article will be considered in exceptional cases, only when it represents an extraordinary contribution, in a high impact journal.

4. Exclusion criteria

4.1. Applicants shall be excluded from the grant award procedure where they:

- a. have been sentenced by final judgment on one or more of the following charges: participation in a criminal organisation, corruption, fraud, money laundering, terrorist financing, terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, child labour or trafficking in human beings;
- b. are in a situation of bankruptcy, liquidation, termination of activity, insolvency or arrangement with creditors or any like situation arising from a procedure of the same kind, or are subject to a procedure of the same kind;
- c. have received a judgment with res judicata force, finding an offence that affects their professional integrity or constitutes a serious professional misconduct;

- d. do not comply with their obligations as regards payment of social security contributions, taxes and dues, according to the statutory provisions of the country where they are established;
- e. are an entity created to circumvent tax, social or other legal obligations (empty shell company), have ever created or are in the process of creation of such an entity;
- f. have been involved in mismanagement of public funds;
- g. were involved in the preparation of the prize documents and this entails a distortion of competition;
- h. are applying with a paper that was considered for the previous edition of the present Award or was supported by private entities (e.g., companies, foundations).

4.2 Applicants shall deliver, when submitting their application, a declaration on their honour certifying that they are not in any of the above-mentioned situations.

4.3 Applicants shall also be excluded from the grant award procedure:

- a. if they fail to comply with the arrangements for the submission of their applications as set out in the call for proposals;
- b. if they are subject to a conflict of interests; a conflict of interests could arise in particular as a result of economic interests, political or national affinity, family, emotional life or any other shared interest;
- c. if they have misrepresented information required for participating in the contest or fail to submit such information;
- d. if they are members of the Scientific Committee of the Francesco della Valle Foundation;
- e. if they have had professional, academic, or research collaboration with any member of said Committee during the past ten years;
- f. if they have personal relationship (such as family ties, friendship, or similar) with any member of the Scientific Committee.

Excellence in Neuroinflammation 2025 Award call at a glance

Eligible authors	Young first or co-first Author (under the age of 40 at the application time)
Eligible papers	Original research article
Eligible Focus	Neuroinflammation mechanisms and pain
Eligible award period	Papers published or accepted for publication between January 1st, 2025, and December 31st 2025. <i>A paper can only be considered for this award once.</i>
Application deadline	January 31, 2026
Award amount	EUR 3,000.00 (gross amount subject to applicable Italian taxation)
Presentation meeting	The awardee will be notified by the end of May and will be invited to present his/her work at the 2026 Excellence in Neuroinflammation Meeting to be held next autumn in Italy.
Award Committee	The Scientific Committee of the Francesco della Valle Foundation chaired by Prof Vincenzo Di Marzo (<i>Université Laval, Canada; Institute of Biomolecular Chemistry, CNR, Italy</i>) and composed as follows:

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	• Prof. Antonio Calignano (<i>formerly at the University of Naples Federico II</i>) • Prof. Salvatore Cuzzocrea (<i>University of Messina</i>) • Prof. Anthony Dickenson (<i>University College London</i>) • Prof. Carla Ghelardini (<i>University of Florence</i>) • Prof. Sabatino Maione (<i>University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli"</i>) • Prof. Rosaria Meli (<i>University of Naples Federico II</i>) • Prof. Enzo Molina (<i>formerly at the University of Parma</i>) • Prof. Luca Steardo (<i>formerly at the Sapienza University of Rome</i>)
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5. Application

The proposal for the "Excellence in Neuroinflammation Award" must be submitted by filling out the online form at the following [link](#). Applications are only accepted from the eligible author of an original research article. The on-line application must include the following information:

- Name and contact information for person submitting the nomination.
- Paper publication/acceptance details
- Short description of the applicant's contribution to the work (maximum 1,200 characters including spaces)
- PDF CV of the author
- PDF copy of the author's valid ID
- PDF of the original research article (published/accepted within the eligible award period)
- A no longer than 250 word-long statement about what, in author's opinion, makes the paper outstanding (i.e., the contribution that this paper has made or it will make to the field)
- A summary of key findings (no longer than 100 words).

5.1 Application deadline

The deadline for applications is January 31, 2026 within 8:00 PM (UTC-GMT). Incomplete or late applications will be automatically rejected.

6. Award Criteria

The Scientific Committee members of Francesco della Valle Foundation will score candidate papers. They will consider innovation, significance to the research community, scientific impact and technical excellence. Each submission will be scored on a 0 (lowest) – 40 (highest) scale, based on each of the four 0 – 10 criteria below.

Criteria:

- scientific rigor: clear definition of the object, correspondence of the approach and method adopted to address the problem (score 0 – 10);
- innovativeness: discovery of unknown mechanisms/pathways (score 0 – 10);
- reproducibility: detailed method description (score 0 – 10);
- translational nature: the potential use of the results in clinical practice (score 0 – 10).

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The winning paper should substantiate a new and novel idea, and inspire fellow scholars in their research, as opposed to just grinding out yet another example of a well-known approach or result (even if the study was neatly conducted and reported). In other words, it is the “WOW” factor that we hope to see in the winning paper.

Based on the evaluation, the highest-ranked submission will be awarded the prize. In case of a tie, the selected publications will be awarded the same amount.

7. Management

Francesco della Valle Foundation will be responsible for the management of the evaluation process. The Foundation will inform the applicants about the decisions individually by May 31, 2026.

8. Award Presentation

The awardee will be invited to give an “Excellence in Neuroinflammation Award” special lecture, during the Excellence in Neuroinflammation Meeting to be held in Italy, autumn 2026. Beside the award, travel and accommodation will be charged to the Francesco della Valle Foundation.

9. Privacy and data processing

Personal data of the submitters will be processed by the Foundation exclusively for the purposes of managing procedures for the Award, in compliance with Legislative Decree 30 June 2003, n. 196 and subsequent amendments and EU Regulation n. 2016/679.

10. Call Schedule

November 2025	Announcement of the call
January 31, 2026	Deadline for proposal submission
February-May 2026	Evaluation of the proposals
May 31, 2026	Decisions about the evaluation results
Autumn 2026 (TBD)	Award Presentation at the Excellence in Neuroinflammation Meeting, Italy