

## **Med Star Award for Postdoctoral or Clinical Fellows, November 2019**

Dr. Daniel Limonta

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### **Biographical Sketch**

I am a Medical Microbiologist and virology researcher (MD, PhD). My career in public health began in Havana, Cuba, where I received a Doctor of Medicine degree (*Magna Cum Laude*) at the University of Medical Sciences. In 2014, I completed a Medical Microbiology Residency followed by a Virology PhD at the Pedro Kouri Institute of Tropical Medicine (IPK) located in Havana city. IPK is the national reference center for medical microbiology and infectious diseases and a World Health Organization Collaborating Center. My PhD dissertation at IPK focused on the association of apoptosis with dengue hemorrhagic fever pathophysiology.

I have also been trained in excellent research programs outside of Cuba. For example, I received training in microbiology and immunology at the Oswaldo Cruz Institute (FIOCRUZ) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. FIOCRUZ is the largest public health institution in Latin-America. I earned an MSc in Cellular and Molecular Biology at the Flavivirus Laboratory of FIOCRUZ. My research focused on the interplay between circulating apoptotic proteins and dengue disease severity.

After finishing my PhD, I was awarded a Post-Doctoral Fellowship from the Alberta Innovates-Health Solutions (AIHS) to work under the supervision of Dr. Tom C. Hobman at the University of Alberta. My research focuses on the development of new *ex-vivo* infection models of Zika virus (ZIKV) in the human developing brain for immunopathogenesis studies and for screening drugs with anti-ZIKV activity.

I have presented my virology research in meetings and institutions in Brazil, US, Canada, Israel, Italy, Spain, Panama, Germany and Oman. My most recent ZIKV research which was published in the Journal of Infectious Diseases was also presented in the US with the support of one Postdoctoral Travel Award from the American Society for Microbiology and another from the American Society for Virology.