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Puerto Rican scientist and CienciaPR co-founder receives multi-million dollar award in recognition of his pioneering studies ^[1]

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NEW HAVEN, CT - Dr. Daniel Colón Ramos, a Puerto Rican scientist, associate professor at Yale University and a co-adjunct professor at the Institute of Neurobiology at the University of Puerto Rico, was selected last month to receive two important recognitions from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), one of the leading scientific agencies in the United States.

The first prize given to Dr. Colón Ramos is the NIH Director's Pioneer Award [3], which supports highly innovative scientists who lead bold research projects with an exceptionally broad scientific impact. The prize is awarded in recognition of the advanced studies carried out by Dr. Colón Ramos in the area of ??neuroscience. The second prize received is the Landis Mentoring Award for Outstanding Mentoring [4], a new award that recognizes excellence and leadership by professors who have distinguished themselves by training new scientists and serving as mentors. In the ten years that Dr. Colón Ramos has been a member of the faculty at Yale, he has trained 27 scientists, most of whom have continued into impressive careers related to science. Altogether, the prizes reach a sum of \$3.6 million, which Colón Ramos will use to continue his research in neuroscience, specifically to understand how the brain works and how memories are formed. The grant will also be used to promote the professional development of future young scientists in his laboratory.

"It moves and deeply honors me that the laboratory has been recognized with these awards. We seek to create an environment where new ideas flourish and challenge the way we think, not only in terms of the scientific paradigms we study, but also in terms of those who belong to science, and to whom science must serve," Dr. Colón Ramos asserted. "I dedicate these awards to my country, Puerto Rico, where I had my first mentors and my first encounters with science, and a place that has influenced my interests and the way I think to this day."

Dr. Daniel Colón Ramos was raised between Barranquitas and Guaynabo, Puerto Rico. He completed his baccalaureate at Harvard University, his doctorate at Duke University and his postdoctoral training at Stanford University. His laboratory at Yale University studies how brain cells, neurons, make precise connections—called synapses—with each other and how that architecture serves as the basis for the behavior of animals and humans. Outside the lab, Dr. Colón-Ramos has also sought connections, specifically between scientists and Puerto Rico. He is trustee of the Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust and co-founder and president of the Board of Directors of Science Puerto Rico (CienciaPR), the largest network of Puerto Rican scientists in the world and a non-profit organization that takes advantage of the knowledge of its rich and diverse community to democratize science, transform scientific education, and promote the development of young scientific leaders.

"We are extremely proud of these recognitions that Daniel has received. Our organization is a living example of his innovative vision, and his commitment to the development of future Puerto Rican scientists and science," commented Dr. Giovanna Guerrero-Medina, Executive Director of CienciaPR.

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