Kelly Suschinsky, a post-doctoral fellow at Queen’s University, has been awarded one of the top awards in Canada for women working in the scientific research field. Dr. Suschinsky has been awarded a L’Oréal-UNESCO 2017 Excellence in Research Fellowship, awarded to support major post-doctoral research projects undertaken by young Canadians.

A post-doctoral fellow working in the Sexuality and Gender Laboratory (SAGE), Dr. Suschinsky’s research focuses on relationships between sexual desire and arousal.

“A lot of past research has focused on men’s sexual arousal and desire and suggested desire was spontaneous,” says Dr. Suschinsky (Psychology). “What we are finding by studying women is that desire for women isn’t necessarily spontaneous. It tends to be triggered or cued by sexual arousal.” The $20,000 in funding will allow Dr. Suschinsky to start a new research project in the SAGE Laboratory at Queen’s.

“It will allow me to conduct a new study around the relationships between sexual desire, arousal, and goals in women,” says Dr. Suschinsky. “We know women who have higher desire tend to engage in sex for different reasons than other women. We want to uncover why.”

Since 1998, the L’Oréal Corporate Foundation and UNESCO have been committed to increase the number of women working in scientific research. Since the program began, it has supported more
than 2,700 women from 115 countries, including Elizabeth H. Blackburn and Ada Yonath, who went on to win a Nobel Prize.

Dr. Suschinsky talks about the challenge facing women researchers, specifically working in scientific research.

“Women in 2017 still encounter challenges when they are in a scientific field,” she says. "We tend to go to school for long periods of time and the careers we chose tend to be fairly demanding. It's difficult to determine if you want to start a family and to balance those commitments with continuing a research program. Sometimes it is difficult to find a balance between those two competing interests."

The award was presented by Liette Vasseur, President of the Natural, Social and Human Sciences Sectoral Commission of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO.

“Tonight, we honor women of science, because the L’Oréal Foundation and UNESCO have a conviction that is also obvious: the world needs science and science needs women, because women of science have the power to change the world,” says Frank Kollmar, President and CEO of L’Oréal Canada. “These five young researchers represent the future of scientific excellence in Canada and the advancement of our society.”

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