



THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP
Minister for Health and Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

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NHMRC DIRECTS \$127M TO VICTORIAN MEDICAL RESEARCH

Victorian health and medical researchers have received almost \$127 million in funding from the latest round of National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) project grants.

I am pleased to announce these 251 grants which are part of \$357 million funded nationally.

I commend the researchers who have been awarded grants. The high calibre of medical research in this country means that successful applicants are of an outstanding level, carrying out research that will benefit the health of Australians in both the long and short term.

Victoria has a long-standing reputation for quality research in many areas of health, among them mental health. Funding will enable the development of diagnostic tools for Alzheimer's disease, the most common cause of dementia in our ageing population, as well as better treatments for the severely disabling illness schizophrenia.

The Victorian projects include:

- **Biomarkers for Alzheimer's disease:** Assoc Prof Kevin J Barnham, University of Melbourne, receives \$583,162 to identify biomarkers in the blood that would act as diagnostic indicators for the most common cause of dementia, Alzheimer's disease.
- **Promoting physical activity for good health in eight-year-olds:** Assoc Prof Jo Salmon, Deakin University, receives \$815,000 to determine whether a two-year intervention reduces sedentary behaviour and promotes physical activity in eight- to nine-year-old children.
- **Controlling that cough:** Dr Stuart Mazzone, University of Melbourne, receives \$414,000 to carry out a clinical trial study into how the brain regulates coughing to identify new therapies for relieving the condition.
- **Brain estrogen fights schizophrenia:** Prof Jayshri Kulkarni, Monash University, receives \$673,000 to follow up her initial investigation of estrogen as an effective treatment for schizophrenia with a clinical trial in 180 postmenopausal women with schizophrenia, using a selective estrogen receptor modulator.
- **Better treatments for brain injury:** Prof Seong-Seng SS Tan, University of Melbourne, receives \$803,000 to improve knowledge on a brain protein that can prevent neurons from dying following brain injury.

- **Understanding atherosclerosis through HIV:** Dr Dmitri Sviridov, Baker Heart Research Institute, receives \$364,500 to investigate how HIV causes atherosclerosis, a major cause of cardiovascular disease, and if similar mechanisms are involved in 'common' atherosclerosis.
- **Breast infections in lactating women:** Dr Lisa Amir, La Trobe University, has been awarded \$751,600 to look at two common infections in breast-feeding women to determine which bacteria causes the infections, and to describe the transmission of the organisms between mother and child.
- **Sun and vitamin D – a protective effect?** Professor Anne-Louise Ponsonby, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, receives \$330,625 to determine what level of sunlight and vitamin D children need to prevent type-1 diabetes.

More than 26 per cent of applications from Victorian researchers were funded, slightly above the national average.

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