



Australian Government

National Health and
Medical Research Council

N H M R C

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MEDIA RELEASE

Filling gaps in multiple sclerosis: Adelaide ophthalmologist receives prestigious NICS Fellowship

Improving the management of painful loss of vision in people with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is the goal of Dr Celia Chen, who has just received a NICS-MSRA Betty Cuthbert Fellowship from the National Health and Medical Research Council and funding partner, Multiple Sclerosis Research Australia.

Dr Chen is an ophthalmologist at Flinders Medical Centre in Adelaide. She will use her Fellowship to undertake a two-year implementation project to address an important evidence-practice gap in the management of acute optic neuritis in people with MS.

“80% of people with MS will have at least one episode of optic neuritis, an inflammation of the optic nerve which causes painful loss of vision. Prompt treatment can result in faster recovery so knowledge about symptoms and treatment options is very important to ensuring optimal management. However, many people with MS don’t receive the correct treatment or understand the options and how this will impact on their sight.

“Through my Fellowship, I’ll work with MS nurses and educators to develop a shared management plan and education tools that will help people with MS make informed decisions about their eye care,” said Dr Chen.

NHMRC Chief Executive Officer, Professor Warwick Anderson has welcomed this opportunity. “We congratulate Dr Chen on her NICS-MSRA Betty Cuthbert Fellowship. Optic neuritis can be a predictor of MS or indicate a worsening of the condition. It’s very important that those affected understand the condition and the treatment options available to them.”

Dr Chen will join five other health professionals from Victoria and New South Wales as 2009 NICS Fellows.

Release ends.

Interviews: Meredith Cameron, T: 03 8866 0409 M: 0409 383 152 meredith.cameron@nhmrc.gov.au

For more information about the other NICS Fellows and the NICS Leadership Program :
www.nhmrc.gov.au/nics

Note to editors

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is Australia's peak body for supporting health and medical research. As part of the NHMRC, the National Institute of Clinical Studies (NICS) works to improve health care by getting health and medical research into practice.

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www.nhmrc.gov.au/nics

GPO Box 4530, Melbourne VIC 3001

Fawkner Centre, Level 5, 499 St Kilda Road, Melbourne VIC 3004

T. +61 3 8866 0400 F. +61 3 8866 0499 E. nics@nhmrc.gov.au

ABN 88 601 010 284

The NICS Leadership program, which was launched in 2003, directly contributes to closing evidence-practice gaps by supporting health professionals to undertake practical projects that aim to improve health outcomes for people by getting high quality evidence into everyday clinical practice in particular health settings.

The two-year, part-time Fellowships are open to early-to-mid career health professionals across the health care spectrum, including doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, paramedics, health care managers, and policy makers.

The Fellowships provide an annual stipend as well as professional development opportunities, training programs in evidence implementation, mentorship, and opportunities to network with and learn from world-class experts who come to Australia as part of NICS' Visiting Experts program.

MS Research Australia

MS Research Australia is accelerating research towards preventing, better treatments and a cure for MS. It is the research arm of MS Australia and the state MS societies. For more information: www.msra.org.au

Applications for NICS Fellowships 2010 open in July 2009.