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$82 million for research into cardiovascular diseases

New research is set to deliver better treatments, prevention and care for people with cardiovascular disease, following the announcement of new National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) grants today.

The funding totals $82.4 million across 106 grants which span improving care and rehabilitation for people following a stroke, investigations into how to repair heart tissue damage, and better methods for preventing cardiovascular conditions.

NHMRC CEO Professor Warwick Anderson said that the research has the potential to make a significant difference for the many Australians with cardiovascular disease.

“Cardiovascular disease is still the leading cause of death of Australians. Fortunately health and medical research has already led to reductions in the rate of cardiovascular disease in Australia. Even so, as our largest cause of death, there is much more to be done,” Professor Anderson said.

“Research in this current funding round not only builds on our existing knowledge of methods of prevention, but also aims to improve how cardiovascular conditions are treated, assess prevention programs and seeks to restore quality of life to patients who have experienced stroke or heart failure.”

Cardiovascular health and stroke is one of the Australian Government’s nine National Health Priority Areas.

“The government’s NHPAs are also strongly supported research areas for NHMRC. In this current round of funding, around $308 million is going towards research focused on the NHPAs,” Professor Anderson said.

The grants were part of a $539.8 million announcement made today by Prime Minister Tony Abbott and Minister for Health Peter Dutton, for 773 grants across a broad range of diseases and health conditions.

Research highlights

Associate Professor Julie Bernhardt, University of Melbourne, Centre for Research Excellence ($2,500,000)
This Centre for Research Excellence in Stroke Rehabilitation and Brain Recovery led by Associate Professor Bernhardt will work to develop better and more cost effective methods for patient rehabilitation after stroke. These methods will be underpinned by the best available evidence regarding neuroplasticity and the restoration of brain function. Researcher capacity in this area will be enhanced to implement these findings into clinical practice and training.

**Professor Anushka Patel, University of Sydney, Project Grant ($2,296,358)**

Professor Patel and her team will conduct a randomised controlled trial that combines three methods to reduce risk factors and improve outcomes for people with CVD. The methods include the administration of a polypill, a GP-focused point-of-care intervention, and a pharmacy-led intervention to improve adherence to and persistence with taking medications. The researchers expect that integrating these three approaches will lead to large reductions in CVD risk factor levels for participants.

**Associate Professor Andrea Driscoll, Deakin University, Translating Research into Practice (TRIP) Fellowship ($172,911)**

This fellowship aims to improve uptake of clinical practice guidelines to ensure high quality of care is provided to in-patients who have suffered heart failure. Associate Professor Driscoll’s research will identify health professional mentors in hospital settings who will work with staff to improve their knowledge and implementation of evidence-based practices to foster better patient outcomes.

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**Further information**

More information about the grants announced today can be found on the NHMRC website under [Outcomes of funding rounds](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au).