Collaborative research promises to deliver better outcomes for patients

Collaboration is key in the latest round of National Health and Medical Research Council grants announced today by Minister for Health Sussan Ley.

Two new grants supporting partnerships between researchers from Australia and the United Kingdom, and five grants that will see top Australian researchers partnering with health-based organisations and governments are set to get underway.

Worth a total of $3.7 million, these projects will seek to improve outcomes for patients and people with conditions such as schizophrenia, nicotine addiction and gout by using e-health solutions and other innovative techniques.

Minister for Health Sussan Ley announced the recipients of these grants today along with the outcomes of three other schemes as part of a $123.5 million NHMRC grants announcement.

NHMRC CEO Professor Warwick Anderson said that teamwork and collaboration are essential to the problem-solving process.

“The best and most lasting solutions are found when we interrogate problems from different angles and using a wide field of expertise,” Professor Anderson said.

“The grants announced today bring together diverse collections of researchers, organisations and governments who all share the goal of finding ways to improve the lives of those who are battling disease or other health conditions, and helping healthy Australians stay healthy.”

“Importantly, these projects are the result of our researchers working together with groups from the broader Australian community to help tackle issues that matter most to them,” he said.

“The challenges facing Australians and our healthcare system are great, but I believe that the passion and intellect of our best minds in research are equal to the scale of the challenge.”

The grant outcomes announced today include:

- Two collaborative research grants jointly funded by the Australian Government through the National Health and Medical Research Council and the United Kingdom’s National
Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The Australian component of the grants totals $1.3 million.
- Five NHMRC Partnership Project grants totalling $2.4 million.

Grant highlights

NHMRC-NIHR Collaborative Research Grants:

**Professor John Gleeson, Australian Catholic University, $407,716**

Professor Gleeson, with his colleagues in Melbourne and Glasgow, will refine, test and conduct a randomised controlled trial of a smartphone application that aims to help individuals with schizophrenia identify early warning signs of relapse and offer a pathway for seeking help.

Team: **Associate Professor John Farhall, Associate Professor Catherine Mihalopoulos, Associate Professor Susan Cotton, Associate Professor Suresh Sundram, Doctor Reeva Lederman, Doctor Mario Alvarez-Jimenez.**

**Professor Ron Borland, Anti Cancer Council Victoria, $913,218**

Research indicates that most smokers who attempt to quit are successful only in the short-term. Professor Borland and colleagues in the UK will test the effectiveness of two strategies to help cigarette smokers quit smoking for at least one year.

Team: **Doctor Coral Gartner, Professor Richard Mattick, Doctor Ryan Coutney, Doctor Stuart Ferguson.**

NHMRC Partnerships for Better Health – Partnership Projects:

**Associate Professor Jane Ford, University of Sydney, $470,063**

This research sees Associate Professor Ford and her team partnering with New South Wales Kids and Families and the Australian Red Cross Blood Service to explore the effect of obstetric and maternity guidelines on blood transfusion practices. Data collected from this research will address gaps in knowledge and help guide policy and practice to further promote positive outcomes for women requiring blood transfusion during pregnancy and childbirth.

Team: **Associate Professor Christine Roberts, Associate Professor David Irving, Professor Jonathan Morris, Associate Professor Michael Nicholl, Doctor Amanda Thomson, Doctor Jennifer Bowen.**

**Partners: Australian Red Cross Blood Service, and Kids and Families (NSW).**

**Professor Richard Day, University of New South Wales, $660,657**

Gout is the most common inflammatory arthritis in men and its incidence is increasing. Professor Day and colleagues will test an eHealth tool that aims to help people with gout stick to their medication regimen to reduce frequency of attacks that raise the risk of joint damage and kidney failure.
Team: Professor Nicholas Zwar, Professor Jennifer Reath, Professor Johanna Westbrook, Doctor Annie Lau, Doctor Melissa Baysari, Doctor Tracey-Lea Laba, Professor Andrew McLachlan, Professor William Runciman.

Partners: Lexy Davies Trust, AstraZeneca, NPS MedicineWise, Arthritis Australia, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA), Australian Rheumatology Association (ARA), Menarini Australia

Further information

More information about the grants announced today can be found on the NHMRC website under Outcomes of funding rounds.

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