

June 2010

The Motor Neurone Disease Research Institute of Australia (MNDRIA) is working to advance research that will contribute to an understanding of the causes, and lead to effective treatments and a cure for MND.

MNDRIA has been driving research forward for 26 years. The urgency to find the answers has not diminished and the funds that are now available are having a significant impact as more researchers take up the challenge. MNDRIA has grown to attract increasing donations and in 2010 is providing \$750,000 for MND research projects and scholarships in Australia.

MNDRIA is encouraging research at many levels:

Young researchers are encouraged to focus their attention on MND through support with doctoral scholarships and postdoctoral fellowships.

Established researchers are supported with grants-in-aid as start-up funding for new projects which can generate data to attract significant project grants from government funding bodies.

Collaborations between researchers are actively encouraged so ideas and resources can be shared both at a national and international level:

- MNDRIA holds a national meeting each year for grant recipients to present their work to one another.
- Attendance at the annual International Symposium on ALS/MND is encouraged and is supported by some MNDRIA grants.

Government participation has been achieved through

- Partnership with the National Health & Medical Research Council to fund PhD scholarships.
- Listing of MNDRIA grants on the Australian Competitive Grants Register.

Research Committee members represent all fields of MND research and voluntarily give their time to review applications for funding to ensure that the available funds go only to the very best projects.

Supporters of MNDRIA are encouraged to give as much as they can to make all of this possible:

- The MND Associations have formed the backbone of the support for MNDRIA for many years.
- Bequests provide an enduring legacy so others will have more hope for the future.
- Individual donors and groups sponsor named grants.
- Every donation from loyal supporters, no matter how small, helps to reach the goal each year.

Although major advances in MND research have been achieved in recent years, much more is needed.

The most recent statistics available from the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare are from 2007 when 594 people are recorded as having died from MND in Australia. In 1997 there were 367 deaths. It is likely that better diagnosis contributes to the higher rate but it is only through research that the trend can be reversed.



Walk to D'Feet Motor Neurone Disease - Lake Burley-Griffin, Canberra, 21 June 2009

All around Australia, communities get together to raise funds for MND research as they Walk to D'Feet Motor Neurone Disease. The amazing response from the community of Benalla in Victoria generates sponsorship for two research projects for a year. Supporters of MND Australia and MND NSW will gather again in Canberra this year on 27 June to acknowledge MND Global Day and the MND community worldwide as they Walk to D'Feet Motor Neurone Disease (details at www.mndaust.asn.au).

International Symposium on ALS/MND

The International Symposium on ALS/MND is an annual event which brings together leading international researchers and Health and Social Care Professionals to present and debate key innovations in their respective fields.

The Symposium is organised by the MND Association UK in co-operation with the International Alliance of ALS/MND Associations. The Symposium was held in Berlin in 2009 and MNDRIA provided support for four grant recipients to attend.

In December 2010, the 21st Symposium will be held in Orlando, Florida and eight Australian researchers will be sponsored by MNDRIA to attend. This is an invaluable opportunity for people to learn, share ideas, form collaborations and be inspired to continue in the global race to work towards a world without MND.

Australia will be centre stage in the global fight against MND in 2011 when the 22nd International Symposium on ALS/MND will be held in Sydney from 30 November to 2 December.



Delegates form collaborations during lunch break: Berlin symposium 2009
Photo : MND Association UK, Thumb Print winter 2010

Sydney will be a meeting place for researchers and health professionals from all around the world (a record 865 delegates attended in Berlin in 2009). The Australian MND community can take the opportunity to participate and be part of this international team as they discuss the latest research and care developments for people with MND. More details about this Symposium will be available at the end of 2010.

Reports on attendance at the 20th International Symposium on ALS/MND in Berlin 2009

from researchers whose grants included funding to attend the symposium. Funding for these grants was provided by MND Victoria.

Dr Anna King, Tasmania

Mick Rodger Benalla MND Research Grant

The 20th Symposium on ALS/MND in Berlin was attended by over 850 delegates from all parts of the world. The meeting was a very positive one leaving researchers and patients with the hope that therapeutic intervention will be possible in the near future. Importantly, there have been significant advances in our knowledge of the disease over the past fifteen years since the discovery of the involvement of mutant SOD1 in a proportion of familial ALS cases. The recent discovery of more mutant proteins (including TDP43 and FUS) and the involvement of TDP43 in sporadic forms of disease is likely to initiate a new wave of advance. The conference highlighted the importance of considering the multifactorial nature of the disease in considering potential therapeutics and drug trials. The importance of

this must be considered in two areas. Firstly, the failure of past drug trials may reflect the multifactorial nature and thus specific drugs may help certain forms of ALS, which need to be identified. Classification of ALS subtypes may become important in the planning of therapeutic interventions. Secondly, therapeutics may have to target a combination of disease mechanisms, including protein aggregation, excitotoxicity, mitochondrial dysfunction, axonal transport and involvement of non-neuronal cells.

As with previous conferences, the format of the meeting and the environment provided gave an ideal opportunity not only to get up-to-date with recent research findings, but to discuss projects with researchers with expertise in specific areas of ALS and specific technical knowledge and to promote future collaborative projects.

Reports on attendance at the 20th International Symposium on ALS/MND in Berlin 2009

Dr Fiona Fisher, Victoria **MND Victoria Research Grant**

During my attendance at the symposium, I was privy to up to date information on interdisciplinary clinical management and research practices. The exposure has provided insights into how to provide continued high quality support for both patients and their carers. Throughout the symposium I attended talks by many internationally-renowned neurologists and neuropsychologists.

Furthermore, the conference provided a platform from which new research ideas and directions were developed. Potential future international collaborations are now being considered.

Networking with research teams from the around the world also provided valuable insights into how researchers internationally are dealing with the challenges of assessing cognition, behavior and social communication in a population that is varied in presentation and disability level. This has led to the integration of new assessments in our ongoing research project which we believe will provide higher standards of results and facilitate publications in peer-reviewed journals.

Overall the symposium provided the forum for like-minded clinicians and researchers to come together and share their experiences and insights into how to offer the most up to date care for patients with MND. In addition to the invaluable networking opportunity the conference afforded, my attendance has provided very useful insights into the diverse approaches to assessing cognitive changes in MND.

It is hoped that this opportunity informs our current and future research practices. Furthermore, the positive response of international researchers to our team at Calvary Healthcare Bethlehem has provided the drive and motivation to continue the high standards of investigation and care that we have been privileged to develop with the generous support of MNDRIA and MND Victoria.

Dr Louisa Ng, Victoria **Zo-eè MND Research Grant**

This was the first time I had attended this symposium and it definitely won't be the last. It was in general an exciting and inspirational symposium both in terms of improving clinical practice and in research. It generated a lot of ideas and was also an opportunity to establish networks which will be important both with collaborative research and with patient care. I presented a poster on multidisciplinary care in MND (which has now been published as a Cochrane review) and hope to present on my research funded by the MND Research Institute in future symposiums.

I am truly really grateful for the funding provided by the MND Research Institute and MND Victoria which has enabled me both to progress with my study and to attend the symposium which was most interesting and informative. It was inspirational and has really further fuelled my passion in research in MND.

Dr Robyn Wallace, Queensland **Mick Rodger Benalla MND Research Grant**

The meeting provided me with my first opportunity to interact with MND researchers from around the world. Most importantly, I was able to discuss my currently funded blood biomarker project with experts working in similar areas. I gained expert advice, including the best way to collect and store blood samples, from researchers using similar techniques.

I also gained significant knowledge about the latest areas of research, mainly in the area of new technologies. One presentation in particular generated a great deal of discussion throughout the meeting; this was a presentation showing that skin cells from an 83 year old MND patient could be grown in culture to produce motor neurons. This breakthrough will allow researchers to study patient motor neurons *in vitro*, and has longer-term implications for treatment. Other emerging technologies included new animal models of MND and advancements in cell sorting to isolate motor neurons from a pool of different cell types.

I thoroughly enjoyed the meeting and came away with improved knowledge of MND overall, as well as specific knowledge relating to my own research.



Bill Gole MND Postdoctoral Fellowships



BILL GOLE
1946 - 2003

Bill Gole died from MND in 2003 three years after being diagnosed with the disease. Bill's courageous battle with MND had a lasting impact on many people - his family, his friends, his work colleagues, the health professionals involved with his care, and many others.

Bill Gole's name lives on as young scientists compete for the postdoctoral fellowship named in his memory and sponsored by a generous friend who is determined to drive MND research forward.

The first Bill Gole MND Postdoctoral Fellowship commenced in 2005 and this year the eighth young Australian scientist to gain this prestigious grant has commenced a career in MND research. The fellowship aims to encourage young researchers to focus their interest on MND. It is directed towards postdoctoral scientists with a track record in neuroscience related to MND and is offered for a period of three years.

These brief reports are from the three concurrent Bill Gole MND Postdoctoral Fellows funded in 2009.

Dr Shu Yang (Bill Gole Fellow 2010 - 2012) has commenced her project '*Investigating the role of recently identified mutant genes in MND pathogenesis*' at the ANZAC Research Institute this year.

Dr Anna King

Menzies Research Institute, University of Tasmania
Bill Gole Postdoctoral MND Research Fellow
2008-2010

Investigating the causes and consequence of axonal pathology in amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

Motor neuron disease (MND) is caused by a loss of function of the nerve cells controlling the muscles. The nerve processes in ALS are frequently swollen with accumulations of proteins and this may be responsible for their loss of function. However the cause and consequence of these swellings is unclear. I have developed a cell culture model that mimics these degenerative changes in motor nerve cells, and have found that this pathological feature is influenced by the health of the surrounding support cells. I am using this model to investigate the factors and mechanisms that cause motor neurons to degenerate, which may indicate new therapeutic opportunities for an otherwise incurable condition.

Dr Jennica Winhammar

Prince of Wales Medical Research Institute, NSW
Bill Gole Postdoctoral MND Research Fellow
2008-2010

Clinical trial to assess the neuroprotective properties of a sodium channel blocking agent in MND.

This project will provide clinical trial information related to the potential neuroprotective properties of a sodium channel blocking agent in patients with motor neuron disease. Specifically, it will establish whether this trial medication can slow disease progression. A potential therapeutic response would provide impetus for a larger scale, multi-centre clinical trial. In addition to providing information about potential mechanisms of neurodegeneration and their treatment, new quantifiable measures will be further developed to objectively monitor MND patients in a clinical trials setting.

Clinical Trial

This trial is now over half way to completion. The clinical trial protocol has been finalised and recruitment has been very successful. 27 patients have completed the trial. There are 26 patients in the trial at present, most of them have completed the lead in phase and have started taking the trial medication/placebo. No major adverse effects have been reported and the drug seems to be well tolerated. More data analysis on the trial will be carried out when the trial is complete as we are still blinded and do not know who is on medication and who is on placebo.

Dr Justin Yerbury

Centre for Medical Biosciences, University of Wollongong.

Bill Gole Postdoctoral MND Research Fellow
2009-2011

Probing molecular mechanisms of microglial and astrocyte activation in ALS.

Recent evidence suggests that motor neurone degeneration is an orderly and propagating process that moves from one part of the nervous system to other nearby locations. All forms of MND are associated with piles of protein junk, called inclusions. These can be found in motor neurones and another non-neuronal cell type – astrocytes. Only astrocytes that are close to motor neurones have these inclusions. I am investigating the possibility that these broken proteins in the junk pile are somehow passed on from one cell to another causing dysfunction and cell death along the way. It is hoped that if we can identify the way that cell death and dysfunction is "passed on" from neurone to neurone we can design a much needed therapeutic.

Grants-in-aid

MNDRIA grants-in-aid are intended as seed funding for start-up projects so the data can 'grow' to produce sufficient background for an application for more significant funding from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

The number of grants that are awarded each year is dependent on the funds that are available at the time.

Some grants are awarded as named grants and are sponsored by an organisation or individual.

Attendance at the International Symposium on ALS/MND is a requirement for some grants - a concept that has been particularly encouraged by MND Victoria.

Eight grants-in-aid were funded by MNDRIA in 2009. Brief reports on these projects are provided here.

Dr Julie Atkin

Howard Florey Institute, University of Melbourne.

New therapeutic approaches for MND based on ER stress inhibition.

Unfortunately there are no treatments that prevent or cure MND and hence effective therapies are required. We recently showed that a cellular pathway called 'ER stress' triggers the death of motor neuron cells in MND.

More importantly, we and others have shown that

(i) ER stress occurs very early in the disease process, prior to the onset of symptoms, suggesting that it is an active, early and important part of the process that kills nerve cells in this disease

(ii) ER stress occurs in humans with the most common form of MND, sporadic disease.

In this proposal we wished to determine if a new drug called BMC which blocks ER stress could be used to delay disease onset and progression of this disease in motor neuron cells in culture and in animals that develop MND.

Outcomes of this study:

1. We found that the drug was protective against the toxic effects which occur in motor neuron cells in MND.
2. More importantly, in the most widely accepted model of disease, SOD1^{G93A} mice, animals that were treated with BMC had delayed symptoms and lost significantly fewer motor neurons compared to untreated animals, demonstrating that this drug is protective against the death of motor neurons in MND. This study has opened up novel and exciting therapeutic targets for human MND and gives support to the hypothesis that ER stress is an important target in this disease. This drug will be taken further in future studies to explore its potential in MND.

Peter Stearne Grant for Familial MND Research

Dr Ian Blair ANZAC Research Institute, NSW

Identifying novel genetic loci for familial motor neuron disease.

The only proven causes of MND are mutations in genes that lead to death of motor neurons. However, the known MND genes only account for about 20% of

familial cases (2% of all MND cases). Our long-term goal is to gain an understanding of the biological basis of MND through identification of genes that cause the disease among the majority of MND families for which no gene has yet been identified. We have recruited over 80 MND families in which the responsible gene is unknown. The aim of this project was to use genetic screening strategies in a subset of our MND family cohort to identify one or more chromosomal regions that harbour new MND genes. In collaboration with Prof C Shaw (Kings College London) mutations were identified in a new MND gene called FUS. Although these mutations are rare among MND cases, the finding is significant because FUS is closely related to another MND gene, TDP-43. Together, these genes implicate a common biological process underlying the disease. Work has now commenced to understand that process. We also anticipate that further genes will be identified among the families under study. Identification of the genes causing MND will lead to a greater understanding of the biology of motor neurons and the basis of familial and sporadic motor neuron degeneration. This understanding is a prerequisite to effective diagnosis, treatment and prevention of the disease. Identification of new genes will have implications for both MND research and diagnostics. New gene tests will be developed to add to those already screened among MND cases with a family history. New MND research will stem from the discovery of new disease genes, including the development of new cell and animal models that will help accelerate the search for therapies.

MND Victoria Research Grant

Dr Fiona Fisher Clinical Neuropsychologist, Calvary Health Care Bethlehem, VIC
Cognitive and Behavioural changes in MND: exploring the impact on caregivers.

While in the past Motor Neurone Disease has been thought to predominantly affect the body, more recent research has noted that a small proportion of persons with MND experience changes in the way they behave and interact with others, and/or in the way they think, make decisions and recall information. In such instances, the team at the Calvary Health Care Bethlehem (CHCB) MND Clinic have observed an increased emotional and physical load on carers and family members, particularly in situations where the person with MND is not aware of such changes. The current project aimed to see how often behaviour and cognitive changes were present, and also identify the behaviour and cognitive changes most challenging for caregivers. It is anticipated that subsequent research programs will look toward the development of interventions and/or education programs to support caregivers, aimed at reducing caregiver distress and promoting improved quality of life for both the persons with MND and their caregivers.

Grants-in-aid

Mick Rodger Benalla MND Research Grant

Dr Anna King Menzies Research Institute, TAS.

The role of distal axonal degeneration in ALS.

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), the major cause of motor neuron disease, is a devastating disease resulting in muscle paralysis through loss of the nerve cells controlling the muscles. Nerve cells are highly specialised cells, which have long processes (axons) that are necessary for the conduction of impulses from the central nervous system to the nerve terminals at the muscle. It is still unclear whether this disease is caused by a dying back from these nerve terminals at the muscles, or a dying forward from the cell bodies in the spinal cord or brain. This question is critical to the provision of therapeutic intervention. This proposal seeks answers to this important question using animal and cell culture models. A primary goal for this research project is to establish techniques and provide preliminary data for a major NHMRC project grant application in this area. Support from the Motor Neuron Research Institute has enabled collection of data that will form the basis of an NHMRC grant application for 2011.

Charles & Shirley Graham MND Research Grant

Dr Marina Kennerson

ANZAC Research Institute NSW

Finding genes causing familial motor neuron degeneration.

Our laboratory has led and coordinated an international collaboration for identifying a gene causing a familial form of distal spinal muscular atrophy on the X chromosome (DSMAX). Through funding from the MNDRIA the laboratory has undertaken state-of-the-art molecular methods to examine the region of DNA on chromosome X containing the gene mutation. We have identified the causative gene responsible for DSMAX which has been submitted for publication. The gene identified when mutated causes the mutant protein to traffic incorrectly (ie. it does not locate to the correct region in the cell). Several mutations have been identified in this gene in unrelated distal spinal muscular atrophy families. Identification of this gene will help to elucidate the importance of the correct trafficking of the newly discovered protein in motor neurons and provide the opportunity for the development of treatment intervention for patients with the mutation that can correct the movement of the protein in the patient motor neurons. Now that the gene has been identified this will allow us to develop disease models to understand the progressive death of motor neurons and axonal degeneration that occurs with the newly identified mutant protein. This has important implications for rapidly progressive forms of motor neuron disease as axonal degeneration is observed in the early stages of ALS. This project has demonstrated the importance of examining slowly progressive motor neuron disorders in which gene

identification in these families facilitates our understanding of motor neuron biology and the important pathways involved in their maintenance.

Zo-è MND Research Grant

Dr Louisa Ng Rehabilitation Physician,

Royal Melbourne Hospital, VIC

Disability in motor neurone disease.

This research project describes the disability experience and needs of MND from the perspective of the people with MND themselves and from their caregivers. This enables health professionals managing MND to be better informed with the aim of providing improved treatment/management.

44 persons with MND (pwMND) and 37 caregivers were recruited through a large tertiary multidisciplinary centre and interviewed. A similar interview was used for all participants (pwMND and caregivers). An open-ended questionnaire with the single question, "what are the main problems you face in your everyday life" was asked, followed by a series of questionnaires on self-reported perceived needs for services and actual services received, anxiety, depression and stress, quality of life and coping strategies. In addition, caregivers were asked to rate their burden of care on a 0-100 scale.

Data from the questionnaires is still being analysed but preliminary findings include:

- Doctors may underestimate the issues of pain and spasticity/cramps/spasms.
- Psychosocial support may be an area of need that should be further explored.
- Many of the disabilities reported are amenable to rehabilitation treatment. This reinforces the recommendation by the European Federation of Neurological Societies that pwMND be able to access multidisciplinary rehabilitation services.
- Many issues with hobbies/leisure activities and socialising are amenable to technological advances currently available. More consideration of the use of such technology could facilitate these activities
- It was noted that in general, most participants were very satisfied with their current level of services. This is likely attributed to the multidisciplinary care that they receive and also to the close links between their health care provider and MND Association of Victoria which provided many of their equipment and advocacy needs.
- Interventions such as determining service needs from the caregivers perspective are necessary to reduce poor outcomes among both caregivers and care recipients with MND.

In using the International Classification of Functioning, disability and health (ICF) to describe the problems and the impact of the problems that the MND population faces, it will be possible to compare the experiences of the MND population in Australia to the international perspective.

Grants-in-aid

Report on project carried over from 2008

Dr Steve Vucic

Prince of Wales Medical Research Institute, NSW.

The role of fatiguing exercise in the aetiology of MND.

Clinically, ALS is characterised by muscle weakness and wasting, together with upper motor neuron features of brisk reflexes and increased tone. In addition, fatigue is a prominent symptom in MND. The mechanisms underlying the development of neurological features, as well as fatigue, remain elusive. Recently, studies have suggested that there is a link between fatiguing exercise and development of MND, although the precise mechanisms mediating this association remain to be fully elucidated.

The current project was designed to investigate whether changes in cortical excitability in MND patients develop after fatiguing exercise and whether they are linked to the perception of fatigue as measured by the modified fatigue impact score. MND patients were recruited from the multi-disciplinary MND clinics at Prince of Wales and St Joseph's/Westmead hospitals. All studies were performed at the Prince of Wales Medical Research Institute, Randwick.

This project builds on previous studies in MND patients which suggest that fatigue may be a process generated in the peripheral nervous system. By dissecting out relative contributions from the upper and lower motor neurons to the development of fatigue, therapeutic strategies could be implemented to overcome this

debilitating symptom. Of further relevance, a potential causal relationship between exercise and neurodegeneration may be established which would in turn guide physical therapy. Future studies should assess the impact of varying levels of exercise intensity on fatigue and cortical excitability in MND.

*Neuron or neurone?
The spelling is optional.
Researchers frequently
use 'neuron' while MND
Associations usually
use 'neurone'.*

Editor

Projects from 2009 continuing in 2010

Reports will be provided when the projects have been completed.

Roth Charitable Foundation MND Research Grant

Professor Nigel Laing

Western Australian Institute of Medical Research

Genome-wide mapping of modifying loci in familial ALS.

Whilst the mapping and identification of some genes responsible for FALS has been successful, other genes remain to be found and modifying factors that influence the phenotypical variation remain to be elucidated. Further understanding of these modifying elements in *SOD1* FALS would be of great benefit in predictive genetic counselling of unaffected relatives and diagnostic testing, as currently it is not possible to accurately predict the degree of disease penetrance or severity (in terms of age at onset and disease progression) from the finding of a specific *SOD1* mutation. Furthermore, a thorough understanding of the genetic component to FALS would provide salient information about how the disease manifests. Results from whole genome association studies could highlight potentially modifying genes and their biological function could then be a possible target for future treatments.

Mick Rodger Benalla MND Research Grant

Dr Robyn Wallace Queensland Brain Institute.

Identifying biomarkers for MND using flow cytometry.

Because the cause of MND is unknown, there is no definitive diagnostic test for MND. In addition, there is no good way to measure the progression of disease. This is important for patients and also in clinical trials. To this end, we will attempt to identify biological markers from MND patient blood samples, using modern technologies. These studies have the potential to identify markers that can be used to track progress of disease and that may give information about what causes MND. This could highlight potential targets for drug development.

NHMRC / MNDRIA PhD Scholarship 2009 - 2011

Dr James Burrell

Prince of Wales Medical Research Institute, NSW,

Cognition and behaviour in motor neuron disease.

As MND progresses, some patients may develop changes in language, personality or behaviour that resemble those symptoms seen in patients with frontotemporal dementia (FTD). Similarly, a significant minority of patients with FTD may develop MND. Recent discoveries in pathology and genetics have reinforced the concept that MND and FTD are two extremes of a single disease continuum.

This project aims to understand these overlaps and to assess other components of cognitive and motor system performance in both patient groups.

Clinical assessments, including a novel test of tool and gesture usage, will be combined with neurophysiological investigations aimed at identifying and characterising motor neurone dysfunction, both in the brain and at the level of the spinal cord. These measures are being correlated with results of formal cognitive testing. Eye movements are also being tested using equipment designed specifically for the purpose. A clear understanding of cognitive symptoms and the relationship of MND to FTD is crucial, not just to increase the basic understanding of MND, but also to highlight the potential impact cognitive symptoms have on patients with MND, their carers and patient management.

MND Research Institute of Australia

Office Bearers and Members 2010

MND Australia is the principal member of the MND Research Institute of Australia.

The operations of both organisations are the responsibility of MND Australia since amalgamation of the two organisations became effective on 4 May 2010.

DIRECTORS

The board of the MND Research Institute is the same as the board of MND Australia, consisting of an independent elected President and a nominated representative from each member MND Association board, the chair of the MNDRIA research committee and up to three co-opted special tenure directors.

DIRECTORS

President: Ralph Warren

Vice President: David Ali, VIC

Treasurer: Bob Howe, NSW

Secretary: Tim Hynes, TAS

David Schwarz, QLD

Stephen Warren, SA

David Whiteman, WA

Professor Dominic Rowe, Research Committee

Special Tenure Directors

Bill O'Reilly

Ian Rodwell

EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Janet Nash

AUDITOR: C M Pitt & Co

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

The Research Committee of MNDRIA reviews research grant applications and determines the distribution of funds within the set policies, and according to the criteria for scientific assessment.

Research Committee Members

Chairman: Professor Dominic Rowe, NSW

Professor Perry Bartlett, QLD

Dr David Berlowitz, VIC

Professor Nigel Laing, WA

Professor Matthew Kiernan, NSW

Dr Susan Mathers, VIC

Assoc Prof Pamela McCombe, QLD

Professor John Pollard, NSW

Professor Dominic Thyagarajan, VIC

Professor James Vickers, TAS

Grants for MND research for 2011

Closing date for applications is

Friday 27 August 2010

Applications are invited for funding for grants-in-aid, a three-year postdoctoral fellowship and a PhD scholarship* in areas of research relevant to motor neurone disease for projects commencing in 2011.

Applications for grants-in-aid up to a maximum value of \$100,000 will be considered. Fourteen grants-in-aid were awarded for 2010 with an average value of about \$32,500.

Go to www.mndresearch.asn.au for application details and grants available. The Research Committee will review all applications and funding decisions will be made at a grants allocation meeting to be held on 25 October 2010.

*Note: Closing date for PhD application through NHMRC is 30 July 2010.

Annual allocation of funds for research

An invitation to apply for grants is advertised nationally from May/June each year. The closing date for grant applications is the last Friday in August.

All research proposals received by the closing date are forwarded to the members of the MNDRIA Research Committee for review. Funds available for allocation are determined by the Board of MND Australia prior to the grants allocation meeting which is usually held in October or November. At this meeting, the Research Committee members discuss the relative merit of all grant applications and decide how the available funds will be distributed. Successful applicants are notified after the meeting and funding for their projects commences in January of the following year.

A scientific meeting is held at the end of each year to allow grant recipients to meet with one another and to present the results of their research.

Donations

Research funded by the MND Research Institute of Australia is dependent on donations. If you would like to contribute to this vital work, please send your gift to:

MND Research Institute of Australia
PO Box 990, Gladesville NSW 1675

Donations can be made by cheque (payable to MND Research Institute of Australia) or credit card (Visa or MasterCard) or go to www.mndresearch.asn.au. All donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible.

Bequests

Your Will can provide an important way of making a gift that can have lasting influence on MND research and give hope for the future.

If you would like to consider the MND Research Institute of Australia in your Will by providing a Bequest from your Estate, please contact your solicitor.

For more details, phone Janet Nash, Executive Officer Research on 02 8877 0990 or email info@mndresearch.asn.au.