



RESEARCH NEWSLETTER

OFFICE OF MEDICAL RESEARCH, UNSW
MEDICINE

DECEMBER 2011

Never Stand Still

Medicine

Dean's Awards 2011

At a ceremony held on 17 November, 2011, the following awards were presented by Professor Peter Smith, Dean, UNSW Medicine:

The Dean's Award for Outstanding Achievement was made to Professor Jeffrey Braithwaite for his contribution to research in Medicine

The Dean's Award for Community Engagement was made to Professor Henry Brodaty for his Outstanding Achievement in his work with dementia in the community



The Dean's Awards for Professional and Technical Staff went to Emma Black, Karen Walker, Greg Arndt, Anil Singh-Prakash, Rosi Benninghaus and (absent) Amanda Roxburgh

Awards were also made for Dean's Rising Stars, Deans List, Conjoint Teaching Awards, McConaghy Prize for Postgraduate Research in the School of Psychiatry and 2011 Student Prizes in MBBS Program. For full list and photos please see: <http://www.med.unsw.edu.au/medweb.nsf/page/deansawards>

NHMRC/ARC Success in Medicine

UNSW was awarded \$70M in grant funding across all NHMRC Grant Schemes this year. UNSW Medicine received 38 new project grants, two Centres of Excellence and two new Program Grants (see below). UNSW also had success in senior Fellowships and NHMRC Partnership Grants (see below).

Congratulations to Sean Emery and colleagues from the Kirby Institute for his award of "Randomised trial to determine the safety and efficacy of early vs deferred treatment of HIV" for \$1,016,660.

ARC success in the School of Public Health and Community Medicine. "Travellers visiting friends and relatives: new approaches to understanding and reducing infectious disease risks: Team led by Prof Raina MacIntyre for \$253,177; Risky business: a qualitative investigation into Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) risk and vulnerability among sex workers in three Pacific countries for \$118,879.

\$18M NHMRC Program Grant Success

Congratulations to Glenda Halliday and team who have been awarded a Program Grant amounting to \$11M for their project :

Title: Frontotemporal dementia and motor neurodegenerative syndromes

Frontotemporal degeneration of the brain is a leading cause of morbidity. It is a pathologically heterogeneous group of rapidly-progressive disorders with behavioural, language and motor deficits. This research program brings together international leaders in clinical, pathological and biological research of these syndromes, aiming to fast track new knowledge and innovations to develop the necessary tools and therapies to effectively diagnose, manage and treat these disorders.

Congratulations to the Chief Investigators - Philip Mitchell, Peter Schofield, Gordon Parker and Michael Breakspear, from the School of Psychiatry who have been awarded a Program Grant over 5 years amounting to \$7.1M for their project:

Title: Depressive and bipolar disorders: Pathophysiology, phenotypes and treatment innovations

Depression and bipolar disorder are two of Australia's leading causes of disease burden with 3-4 million Australians predicted to suffer one of these disabling mood disorders during their lives. However, despite being such a serious health burden, there are major limitations to current knowledge and management of these illnesses: i) the underlying pathophysiology has proven elusive; ii) diagnosis is still rooted in clinical opinion, lacking objective imaging or other biomarkers; iii) large efficacy and effectiveness trials of standard clinical treatments for both disorders have yielded disappointing results; and iv) treatment guidelines lack clear individual application, being unrelated to pathophysiology, phenotype or prototypic definition. Thus research that better characterises and explains these disorders is essential for the development of personalised therapy, as has rapidly evolved in other fields of medicine. This program has three major research themes. Theme 1 "Pathophysiology" aims to elucidate aetiological processes by defining pathophysiology from genes to behaviour, and mapping the trajectory of illness to determine when, where and how to intervene to pre-empt disability. Theme 2 "Phenotype" aims to identify novel biological or clinical phenotypes distinct from current DSM-IV orthodoxies. Theme 3 "Therapeutics" aims to develop novel therapeutic approaches, predicated on knowledge derived from the pathophysiological and phenotypic studies. The overall program is designed to facilitate iterations between each theme. This program of innovative research will engage the considerable and complementary skill sets of the four CIs, and the expertise of the multidisciplinary team of APs, to further our knowledge of the pathophysiology and phenotypes of the mood disorders. Its overarching objective is to improve and personalise therapeutics for the many Australians with these common and highly disabling illnesses.

Centre for Research Excellence Awards

Congratulations to Professor Raina MacIntyre and team on the award of the NHMCR Centre for Research Excellence to examine immunisation in understudied and special risk populations. This Centre of Excellence will examine immunisation in understudied populations. Led by Head of the School of Public Health and Community Medicine, Professor Raina MacIntyre said the Centre will address research gaps in at-risk populations, such as older and Indigenous Australians, as well as migrants and refugees, where targeted research is not commercially viable.

Congratulations to Professor Enrico Coiera and his team on the award of the NHMRC Centre for Research Excellence in Informatics and E-health. This Centre of Excellence proposes to develop an integrated E-health training program to attract and retain the 'best and brightest' to a career in E-health research, and to support these individuals from their time as doctoral candidates through to helping mid-career postdoctoral research fellows become established and independent research leaders.

Goldstar Awards



Congratulations to the 33 members of the Faculty who were awarded Goldstar Awards. Goldstar Awards are made to researchers who have highly rated grant applications that have not been funded by NHMRC. The list can of successful applications can be found at:

[http://www.med.unsw.edu.au/medweb.nsf/resources/RNews10/\\$file/GOLDSTARS+2012+LIST+FINAL.pdf](http://www.med.unsw.edu.au/medweb.nsf/resources/RNews10/$file/GOLDSTARS+2012+LIST+FINAL.pdf)

Silverstar Awards



This year for the first time, the Faculty awarded a Silverstar Award to NHMRC applicants who missed out on a Goldstar but submitted competitive grants that were considered to have a high chance of success in the next round. The Award was for \$20,000 to acknowledge the potential of NHMRC grant applications.

Major Research Equipment & Infrastructure Initiative (MREII) 2012

The Faculty was awarded \$2.9M in Major Research & Infrastructure grants recently. These funds will be used to purchase common equipment to facilitate research in the Faculty's major research facilities and centres.

Faculty Research Grants/Early Career Researcher Grants

This year 91 applications were received for Faculty support. Successful applicants have been notified. From 2012 the Faculty will put in place a new system in order to support strategic initiatives and ECRs.

Next year we will introduce a new form of Faculty grant support in the form of an extension of this year's Silver Star Award system, i.e. we will award the Faculty research funds based on participation and results of Category 1 grant submissions that were unsuccessful and did not receive a Goldstar Award. The criteria for these awards will be based upon the criteria used for Silver Star awards and will also be judged on the likelihood that the research project will be funded in the future given more time to prepare the submission and increase the amount of preliminary data. Grants also will be assessed on their strategic alliance with the faculty's goals and the ECR status of the applicants. We will retain some funds to support new staff members and early career researchers who need to generate preliminary data before submitting grant applications.

Vice-Chancellor's Teaching Award

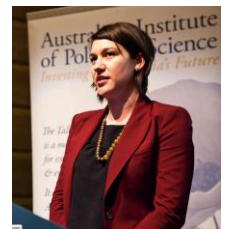
Congratulations to A/Prof Nicodemus Tedla who has been selected to receive a Vice Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence (VCATE) for 2011. I am sure that you will all join me in congratulating Nicodemus on this well-deserved recognition of his achievements in teaching. Nicodemus is the fifth member of the Department of Pathology in SOMS to win this prestigious award.

2011 NSW Young Tall Poppy Awards

Drs Melissa Green, Eddy Pasquier and Nicola Smith have been awarded the 2011 NSW Young Tall Poppy Award, presented recently at Sydney's Powerhouse Museum.

The awards recognise young scientists who excel at research, leadership and communication. The program aims to inspire young people and the broader community about the possibilities of science and to encourage a culture of innovation alongside the promotion of scientific literacy. Work on the early detection of mood and psychotic disorders, how blood vessels grow in tumours and the role proteins play in high blood pressure has won three researchers prestigious science awards.

Dr Green's research focuses on the controversial biological link between mood disorders (such as bipolar disorder) and psychotic disorders (such as schizophrenia), which often run together in families. She examines common genetic variants associated with disturbances in the brain of people suffering mood or psychotic disorders, searching for vulnerability markers that might enable early detection and treatment of these conditions.



Dr Pasquier (pictured here with Professor Maria Kavallaris), from the Children's Cancer Institute Australia (CCIA), researches the mechanisms involved in the formation of blood vessels within tumours, particularly how anti-cancer drugs can interfere in this process to slow cancer growth and spread. Ultimately, his work aims at developing new cancer treatments that target the creation of tumour blood vessels.



Dr Smith's work at the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute (VCCRI) is focused on understanding how novel proteins contribute to high blood pressure, allowing for the development for more effective drugs with fewer side effects.

She is also investigating proteins active in obesity, an increasingly prevalent condition in Australia and also a major complicating factor leading to cardiovascular disease.



Congratulations!!

Dr Alex Wilde who was awarded a \$200,000 grant from *beyondblue* to develop an innovative web-based tool which will focus on preventing depression in healthy young people by building resilience.

A/Professor Gawaine Powell Davies, Dr Elizabeth Denney-Wilson and Dr Elizabeth Comino from the **UNSW Research Centre for Primary Health Care and Equity** who were 3 out of 11 profiled researchers in the 2011 Snapshot of Australian primary health care research, UNSW :

http://www.phcris.org.au/phplib/filedownload.php?file=/elib/lib/downloaded_files/publications/pdfs/phcris_pub_8352.pdf

Endeavour Executive Awards – Visitors to the School of Medical Sciences

Professor Philippe Tessier from Laval University, Canada will be working with Professor Carolyn Geczy for 6 months during 2012.

Professor Judith Anderson from the University of Manitoba, Canada will work with Professor Edna Hardeman (SOMS) during 2012.

VC Postdoctoral Research Fellowships

Congratulations to **Thomas Sobey** (CVR, School of Medical Sciences) and **Amanda Craig** (School of Medical Sciences) on the award of Vice-chancellor's Postdoctoral Research Fellowships for 2012.

Oxford Nuffield Medical Fellowship 2012/13 – Oxford University, England

Applications are invited for an award under the Scheme for Oxford Nuffield Medical Fellowships in either a Clinical Medicine or Medical Science department of the University. This prestigious fellowship carries an allowance of £41152 (plus any cost of living increases).

Applicants should have graduated from one of the universities listed below and should either hold a medical qualification obtained in Australia or the United Kingdom or have appropriate research experience. There is no limit as to age or status.

The fellowship is tenable for two years in the first instance, with the possibility of an extension for a third year. Fellows are expected to return to Australia at the end of the fellowship to continue to do work of a similar nature.

The award is available from 1 October 2012 or, subject to consultation with the University's Medical Sciences Office and the department concerned, from such other later date as may be agreed. The next round of Nuffield Medical Fellowship for Australia will be in 2013/14.

Further information, including details of the research interests of those departments in which the fellowship may be held may be obtained from the Chairman of the Selection Committee and at website http://www.ox.ac.uk/divisions/medical_sciences.html

Participating Universities

University of Adelaide, Flinders University, University of Melbourne, Monash University, Australian National University, University of New South Wales, University of Newcastle, University of Queensland, University of Sydney, University of Tasmania, University of Western Australia.

Unlocking IP for Business

In a first for Australia, the University of New South Wales will offer the majority of its intellectual property to companies for free, in a radical step to turn more university research into real-world applications.

The pioneer of Easy Access, Dr Kevin Cullen, will implement this strategy at UNSW as the new head of [NewSouth Innovations](#), the university's commercialisation company. Dr Cullen initiated the approach while the Director of Research and Enterprise at the University of Glasgow.

UNSW will join a handful of universities worldwide including the University of Glasgow, Kings College London and the University of Copenhagen that are utilising the Easy Access approach to spark greater collaboration between universities and industry.

Under the [new approach of Easy Access IP](#), a selection of UNSW's intellectual property will now be offered to the private sector to develop for free, with simplified, one-page agreements replacing complicated licensing negotiations.

UNSW Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor Les Field said the new approach would put more university generated research into real world use.

"The focus of Easy Access IP is to put more university IP into the hands of the private sector and to allow industry to build on our research and take it to market," Professor Field said. "This is quite a radical departure from the way that UNSW and most universities have been doing business." NSi Chief Executive Dr Kevin Cullen said at present the licensing of university IP to companies was viewed as "difficult, painful and cumbersome".

"We want to change this. We want to remove the barriers and the obstacles so that companies will choose UNSW as a partner to work with, and so we can build positive partnerships between researchers and industry based on the Easy Access IP approach," he said.

Dr Cullen said that for the small proportion of IP where UNSW can identify significant commercial value, such IP would be exploited with commercial partners. But for other developments, the Easy Access approach will be used.

"In these cases, the IP will be offered to entrepreneurs and industry for free," Dr Cullen said. "In order for the university to decide on the most appropriate licensee, those interested need to explain how they will use the IP to benefit the economy or society." IP offered under the Easy Access portfolio will have an additional three conditions:

- Companies must acknowledge UNSW's contribution and report on the progress
- Companies agree that if they have not exploited the IP within three years, it will be transferred back to UNSW
- There will be no limitations on UNSW's use of the IP for the university's own research.

Academics will be able to choose to "opt-in" and have their IP included in the Easy Access approach. Businesses will then be able to view the Easy Access offerings via technology web portals, and have the ability to quickly get in touch with NewSouth Innovations to gain access to the technology.

Scholarship Deadline

Please note that the next UNSW deadline for applications for Local and International scholarships (APA, IPRS, TFS) is **2 March 2012**. This deadline is for Scholarships [starting in Session 2 2012](#). The **early deadline** is to ensure that successful international applicants have time to obtain visas before the start of Session 2.

Discovery Project Funding Rules

The Discovery Projects Funding Rules for funding commencing in 2013 are now available on the ARC website:

http://www.arc.gov.au/ncgp/dp/dp_fundingrules.htm

The ARC will advise of the opening for proposals shortly. The closing date for submission of proposals is 5:00pm (AEDT), **Thursday 1 March 2012**.

Please see attached the first **Grants Management Office Discovery Projects Alert**. This alert contains information on submission timelines, changes to the funding rules from previous rounds, and outlines support available to applicants.

If you have any questions regarding the *Discovery Projects* scheme, please email the Grants Management Office at mygrants.gmo@unsw.edu.au

Paper of the Month

Rowena Bull, Fabio Luciani, Kerensa McElroy, Silvana Gaudieri, Son Pham, Abha Chopra, Barbara Cameron, Lisa Maher, Gregory Dore, Peter White, Andrew Lloyd "Sequential Bottlenecks Drive Viral Evolution in Early Acute Hepatitis C Virus Infection", *PLoS Pathogen*, 7 (9): e1002243.

Best Wishes for Christmas and 2012



I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your help and assistance during 2011 in our attempt to improve research in the Faculty of Medicine, UNSW. Whilst I am sure you agree that this has been another very successful year for the Faculty in terms of obtaining increased research funding and fellowship support, there is always room for improvement and a large number of excellent research projects remain unfunded, despite the high quality of both the applicants and the research.

Our aim for 2012 is to further increase our level of research support and improve our resources and infrastructure, to achieve our full potential. I greatly appreciate your continuing support in this endeavour and would like to take this opportunity of wishing you the best for the festive season.

Denis Wakefield, Associate Dean Research

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