MEDIA RELEASE

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New research leads the fight against diabetes

Federal Health Minister, Hon Sussan Ley announced Diabetes Australia’s prestigious Millennium Research Awards for Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes today

Dr Muh Geot Wong of the Kolling Institute of Medical Research in Sydney has been awarded the Underworks Millennium Type 2 Award. “People living with diabetes are at serious risk of complications including kidney disease. Diabetes is one of the leading causes of kidney damage leading to dialysis. In this study, our aim is to identify blood markers that enable clinicians to identify patients with type 1 and type 2 diabetes who are at highest risk of developing end stage kidney disease so that early intervention and targeted therapy can be focused on these people” said Dr Wong.

According to Prof Greg Johnson, CEO Diabetes Australia, diabetes is fast becoming the major threat to human health and productivity. “Here in Australia, around 1.7 million people are living with diabetes and this costs Australia over $14.6 billion annually. By 2017, diabetes will overtake heart disease as the leading cause of disease burden in Australia.”

In accepting the Millennium Type 1 Award, Dr Andrew Sutherland from St Vincent’s Institute of Medical Research (SVI), Melbourne said, “Human type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease that results in the destruction of pancreatic β-cells which produce insulin. We are studying type 17 immune cells which may be involved in the damage to the pancreas and we hope to provide new targets for therapeutic intervention to prevent type 1 diabetes.”

In addition to the Millennium awards, two general grants were awarded to ACT based diabetes researchers as part of the World Diabetes Day announcements.

Prof Deborah Davis from the University of Canberra and ACT Health will use smart phone technology to assist women to achieve a healthy weight gain in pregnancy. “Excessive weight gain in pregnancy contributes to general weight gain over the childbearing years for the woman and babies born to mothers who are overweight, obese or who have excessive gestational weight gain during pregnancy are more likely to be overweight and obese later in life. These factors increase the risk of diabetes for mother and baby” she said.
Prof Stefan Broer from the Australian National University will use his grant to study ways to treat type 2 diabetes and insulin resistance.

*Diabetes Australia is the national body for people affected by all types of diabetes and those at risk. Diabetes Australia is committed to reducing the impact of diabetes. We work in partnership with diabetes health professionals, researchers and the community to minimise the impact of diabetes.*

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