

Investigating the overlap between type 1 diabetes and multiple sclerosis

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Dr Grant Parnell, Westmead Institute for Medical Research.

MS Research Australia and JDRF Australia have come together to jointly fund an innovative research fellowship to investigate the overlap between the two diseases. JDRF Australia is the national funding body for research into type 1 diabetes, an autoimmune disease which has much in common with MS.

We are pleased to announce that following a competitive process the fellowship has been awarded to Dr Grant Parnell, from The Westmead Institute for Medical Research. Funded via a generous grant from the Macquarie Group Foundation, the fellowship will provide \$150,000 over one year, that will go towards salary plus other costs associated with this research.

Dr Parnell will benefit from mentorship from leading researchers in the fields of MS and type 1 diabetes. Professor Graeme Stewart AM and Associate Professor David Booth, from The Westmead Institute are both experts in MS and Professor Christopher Goodnow, from the Garvan Institute of Medical Research is an internationally recognised researcher in type 1 diabetes.

The fellowship will begin with a focus on the role genetics plays in both diseases and investigate the common genes which have been identified to increase the risk of developing MS and type 1 diabetes.

Another aim is to broadly develop a range of research projects which jointly examine both diseases. This part of the fellowship will allow MS Research Australia and JDRF Australia to further develop the research potential of this cross-disease space.

‘This funding partnership is unique for MS Research Australia, in that it has allowed us to partner with a high impact charitable research organisation working in another disease’, said Dr Matthew Miles, Chief Executive Officer. ‘The fields of MS and type 1 diabetes research both have much to learn from each other, and we are pleased that this fellowship will allow us to formally recognise and build this area of research’.