

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS RESEARCH AUSTRALIA

Out of the box: **FREEDOM from MS**

MS research supporters could raise more than \$100,000 in June – if enough volunteers are involved by taking a box of bright and fun 'FREEDOM from MS' merchandise to sell on the streets, workplaces or in your local community.

The eye-catching range of merchandise includes sparkling pens that light up when you write, a bottle opener key ring and classic lapel pins, available in a well presented merchandise box.

Please help us and recruit families, friends, schools kids and corporate supporters to sell these items throughout June. There's a particular focus on June 7 when we'll be selling in various prominent CBD locations in Sydney and Melbourne. The items are also on sale in Franklins stores and Bendigo Bank branches, but only in NSW (this year).

All sales will contribute by helping MSRA fund and steer research to find prevention strategies, better treatments, and ultimately a cause and a cure – true **FREEDOM from MS**.

Contact Lauren Gilder in the MSRA office on 1300 356 467 or lgilder@msra.org.au for more information or simply ask for a **FREEDOM from MS** box to be sent to you.



- ▶ COLOURFUL AND USEFUL PENS, PINS AND BOTTLE OPENER KEY RINGS
– ALL AVAILABLE TO SELL – RING 1300 356 467.



MS Awareness Week



Event Partner



Conference check

AT THE TWO-DAY NEUROBIOLOGY CENTRE CONFERENCE IN MARCH,

25 leading Australian researchers unanimously agreed that two new research platforms, human brain tissue and proteomics, are vital to the success of MS research.

Researchers attending the conference at Monash University in Melbourne hailed the recently established MS Brain Bank as an excellent platform facility to provide brain and other tissue to scientists around Australia. This will enable researchers to concentrate much more on researching human MS tissue.

'Hopefully, animal models will then be focused on answering specific questions that arise from findings made by the study of human tissue,' said conference moderator, Dr Bill Carroll, Chairman of MSRA's Research Management Council.

'Most brain banks don't succeed in minimising the interval between acquisition and preservation of tissue. The longer the interval, the greater the autolysis or degradation – which means poorer quality information for the researcher – and ultimately fewer results,' said Dr Carroll, 'so we aim to shorten this interval.'

Also, accurate clinical phenotyping and, if possible, imaging, would better inform researchers using the MS Brain Bank, the researchers indicated.

Conference attendees also encouraged the development of a proteomics research resource that would be based in the University of Adelaide.



▶ NEUROBIOLOGY CONFERENCE COORDINATOR, DR. BILL CARROLL.

Proteomics is the study of protein production which is the net effect of gene expression and in turn determines cell function.

'This is therefore much closer to how the cells work than genomics. In terms of MS, it means we will have a better idea of what's happening at a biochemical or molecular level', said Dr Carroll.

Proteomics equipment which can process minute samples of tissue in great detail, is a potentially powerful tool for MS research. Professor Shaun McColl from the University of Adelaide, now has the task of developing the concept with Dr Peter Hoffmann, a proteomics specialist from Germany now resident in Australia.

Among the other Neurobiology Workshop attendees were Professor Claude Bernard from Monash University, Professor Trevor Kilpatrick from the University of Melbourne and the Director of the MS Brain Bank, Dr Peter Patrikios.

MS FRONTIERS 2007 CONFERENCE, JUNE 14-15, is in London this year, at the Novotel Euston Hotel. MS Frontiers is a collaboration between MSRA and the MS Societies of the UK, USA, and Canada. This conference will present each country's research in the context of our world-wide effort.

The keynote speaker is Professor Larry Steinman MD, Stanford University. Australia's key speaker is Professor Trevor Kilpatrick. Professor Kilpatrick is Director, Centre for Neuroscience at University of Melbourne and leads one of Australia's biggest MS research teams. He will speak on day 1 on the epidemiology of MS.

Link: www.mssociety.org.uk

PROGRESS IN MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS RESEARCH, WILL BE HELD NOVEMBER 15-16, at the Walter & Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research, Melbourne.

International guest speakers at this ninth biennial meeting are Professor Chris Linington from the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, Professor Jun-ichi Kira from the Kyushu University, Japan and Professor Richard Ransohoff from the Lerner Institute, Cleveland, USA.

Researchers interested in making a 15-minute presentation or including a poster at this meeting should contact Sue Barham, Research Coordinator, on (08) 9346 2471 or email sumsr@iinet.net.au to discuss format requirements. The \$250 attendance fee includes a cocktail reception and lunch. See www.msra.org.au to register.

Hot Adelaide night



Fiona Du Rieu saw F5m's website about people with MS doing it for themselves and decided to act.

As a result, Saturday April 14 saw the Adelaide Showground's Ridley Pavillion decked out for a gala ball and humming with 850 people. Although she has MS, Fiona's energy and organisational skills raised a wonderful \$60,000.

Fiona's friend Deborah Landau was the second-in-command for the event. Thanks also to performers who donated their time, including stand-up man Tim Ferguson, as MC, and singer Catherine Lambert.

Fiona's wonderful work and funds raised will help initiate MS research via a proteomics platform, to be established, at the University of Adelaide under Professor Shaun McColl.

VIP guests included Professor Shaun McColl, the Hon. John Hill, SA's Minister for Health, and MS Society of South Australia's President, Tony Abbott and its CEO Meg Lees.



▶ RENOWNED ADELAIDE AUCTIONEER BERNARD BOOTH DOING A GREAT JOB.



▶ FIONA DU RIEU THANKING ALL HER VOLUNTEERS INCLUDING DEBORAH AND MATTHEW LANDAU, AND CATHERINE LAMBERT WHO ORGANISED ALL THE ENTERTAINMENT.

Not so trivial

June is trivia night month for F5m, which has posted a very useful DIY Trivia Night Manual on its website. These manageable events are F5m's bread and butter and if everyone with MS in Australia raised \$300 at a trivia night, F5m would actually exceed its \$5 million goal!

To take the load off the organiser and encourage hassle free fundraising, this Trivia Night information includes tips on venues, prizes, guests and how to organise the lot.

To be part of Trivia Night Month, call us on 1300 356 467 to register your trivia night and we'll send you all the 'trivia' questions and tips on running the event. For the manual, go to www.F5m.org.au, click events.

Self-starters wanted

As a vehicle for the MS community to pool their efforts and resources towards funding and finding a cure, F5m is very quick off the mark. Only 18 months old but, with strong support from self-starters in the MS community, F5m has quickly raised almost \$900,000.

'People with MS have organised golf days, gala dinners, garage sales and community events and they are having fun while they fundraise' said Ian Ballard, the founder of F5m.

The impetus for F5m was Ian's idea that if just 2,000 people with MS raised \$2,500 each, then there's \$5 million to boost MSRA research.

'Doing it for ourselves is incredibly empowering. And to have some input into where research money is directed is further motivation for people in the MS community.

'You only have to look at the success of incredible event organisers such as Adelaide's Fiona Du Rieu to see the possibilities,' said Ian.

Events don't have to be huge and should match the organiser's available time, skills and energy levels – or powers of delegation! To find out how you can get involved, or for tips on running your own events, visit www.F5m.org.au

FOR INFORMATION ON ALL F5m events, call Neil Robertson on 1300 356 467 or visit www.F5m.org.au

Smoke alarm

Recent research shows that smoking has remarkably high incidence in people with MS. It also shows the habit exacerbates MS to the extent that it could be the first identified modifiable risk factor for MS progression.

A Norwegian study has found the risk for developing MS was nearly twice as high in people who smoked – or had ever smoked – than in non-smokers. The study of more than 20,000 people (40-47 yrs) found that when men and women were evaluated separately, the risk for developing MS was nearly 3 times greater for male smokers and 1.5 times greater for female smokers than non-smokers.

It is likely that smoking might help bring on MS in someone whose genetic makeup already makes them vulnerable, according to neurologist Dr Gary Franklin from the University of Washington School of Public Health and Community Medicine, Seattle.

However, he also said, 'Neither having the susceptible genes alone, nor being exposed to environmental factors is enough to cause MS.'

Another recent study, which discovered cigarette smoking could contribute to the progression of MS, also suggested that quitting smoking could limit or delay central nervous system deterioration. This study, by the UK Harvard School of Public Health, is the first in which a modifiable risk factor for MS progression has been identified. It provides a new strategy for smokers hoping to control MS' neurological damage.



▶ AS CEO OF MS SOCIETY OF SA/NT, MEG LEES IS CONCERNED FOR THOSE LIVING WITH MS WHO ARE SMOKING OR STRUGGLING TO GIVE IT UP AND HAS BEEN RESEARCHING THE SUBJECT. AS A PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHER PRIOR TO HER POLITICAL CAREER, LEES WELL UNDERSTANDS THE RISKS ANY SMOKERS TAKE BUT NOW BELIEVES THE RISK FACTORS ARE FAR GREATER FOR SMOKERS WITH MS.

MS also progressed more quickly in smokers, the UK Harvard study found. It also supported earlier research showing that smoking might increase the risk of an initial MS diagnosis. Current and past smokers were found to be 30% more likely to be diagnosed with MS than those who had never smoked.

MSRA Partners



MSRA Multiple Sclerosis Research Australia

The Campaign Coordinator
PO Box 1246
Chatswood NSW 2057
Australia

Ph: 612 / 02 9411 7811
Local Call: 1300 356 467
E-mail: info@msra.org.au
Web: www.msra.org.au

Yes, I want to help MS Research Australia

My tax deductible donation is \$ _____

Please debit my: Visa Card Mastercard Amex Diners Club

Card No: _____ Exp: ____ / ____

Signature: _____

OR I have enclosed my: Cheque/Money Order payable to MS Research Australia.

I want to support MS Research Australia on an ongoing basis, please charge \$ _____ to my credit card per month until notified.

To donate now go to www.msra.org.au Donations over \$2 are tax deductible

Title: _____ First Name: _____ Surname: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone (W): _____ (H): _____

Email: _____ Please send me information on how I may support the MSRA in my Will.

