

Kia ora

Welcome to our March Newsletter. There are so many things happening in brain research at the moment. We have numerous Masters and PhD students starting exciting projects. There is some fantastic research underway including a study on multiple sclerosis by Dr. Ruth Leadbetter. Our team were part of a world-first NZ study on the link between strokes and stress which has featured in the news. And last but not least, March is International Brain Awareness Month and we have exciting events to invite you to.

## **Researcher Profile**

### **Dr. Ruth Leadbetter**

Ruth studied medicine at the University of Otago before completing her neurology specialist training at Wellington Hospital. She is particularly interested in neuroimmunology, which covers neurological conditions believed to be caused by dysfunction of the immune system, such as multiple sclerosis.

After recently qualifying as a neurologist, Ruth has been awarded a VJ Chapman Fellowship from the Neurological Foundation to complete a research project studying multiple sclerosis (MS).



MS is a chronic neurological disease with an average life expectancy 6-14 years lower than the general population. There is a lack of MS mortality data worldwide and there have been no nationwide studies on MS mortality in the southern hemisphere in over 50 years.

This study will assess MS mortality rates in New Zealand and investigate potential contributing factors. Ruth's results will provide essential baseline information for treatment funding decisions and other healthcare initiatives needed to improve the survival of New Zealanders with MS. This is such important research to advance advocacy for MS patients in New Zealand.

## Spotlight on Research

### Study shows link between strokes and stress of terrorism

As we commemorate the second anniversary of the Christchurch terror attacks, we also look at the impact the event had on the community as a whole. In a world-first NZ study, a collaboration between the New Zealand Brain Research Institute and the Canterbury District Health Board has found there were four times more strokes in Christchurch in the days after the Christchurch mosque attacks.

[Listen to the Newstalk ZB interview here](#) and [watch the Newshub article here](#).

### Vine Run at Pegasus Bay 2021

How fantastic is this! Mike Donaldson (right) presented us a cheque for \$25,000 from the recent, successful [Vine Run at Pegasus Bay Winery](#). Research Director, Dr Michael MacAskill (left) said "[Pegasus Bay Winery](#) has been a long-time supporter of neurological research in Canterbury and we are so appreciative of everything they do."



A special thank you to the 700 runners who helped make this such an amazing event.

### March is Brain Awareness Month

The New Zealand Brain Research Institute is marking Brain Awareness Month with a range of free, public education talks you may be interested in.

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March at 5.30pm** is **Brain Health Matters**, a showcase of seven brain research projects based in Christchurch, ranging from brain imaging, stroke treatment, and earthquake brain to communication disorders, Huntington's, Parkinson's and dementia. [Register here](#).

**Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March at 10.30am** is **Dementia: variations, risk and prevention**, presented by Professor John Dalrymple-Alford. John is the coordinator of the Christchurch arm of the "Dementia Prevention Research Clinics", conducted at the New Zealand Brain Research Institute. [Register here](#).

**Monday 29<sup>th</sup> March at 10.30am** is **Parkinson's disease: more than just tremors**, presented by Professor Tim Anderson. Tim is an internationally renowned neurologist who specialises in movement disorders. [Register here](#).

Registration is essential and attendance can be either in person or to receive a recording of the talks.

# Did you know one in five New Zealanders live with a neurological condition?

To help raise awareness of neurological research in Canterbury, for the month of March we have a number of billboards and advertisements in The Press and we're highlighting some key statistics. These are:

- One in five New Zealanders live with a neurological condition
- Parkinson's disease will double in the next 20 years, and
- 60% of New Zealanders suffer from sleep problems, ranging from insomnia to chronic sleep problems.

Hopefully you'll see us around the city and know that you're one of the people who are helping to make a difference by supporting neurological research in Canterbury.

**One in FIVE**  
Kiwis live with a **neurological** condition


The New Zealand Brain Research Institute is doing ground-breaking research in Canterbury, relying solely on research grants, fundraising and donations.

To keep our vital work going - we need your help!

**DONATE TODAY AT** [www.NZBRI.ORG/DONATE](http://www.NZBRI.ORG/DONATE)  
and then grow your own "brain" plant with our packet of Celosia seeds!

HELP US TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE  
**BRAIN AWARENESS MONTH - MARCH 2021**

**New Zealand Brain Research Institute**



**60%** of New Zealanders suffer from **sleep** problems  
ranging from insomnia to chronic sleep problems

HELP US TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE  
**BRAIN AWARENESS MONTH | MARCH 2021**

**DONATE TODAY AT** [www.NZBRI.ORG/DONATE](http://www.NZBRI.ORG/DONATE)

**New Zealand Brain Research Institute**

**One in FIVE**  
neurological

**DONATE TODAY AT** [www.NZBRI.ORG/DONATE](http://www.NZBRI.ORG/DONATE)

Supporting neurological research in Canterbury

## 2021 New Zealand Brain Research Institute Appeal

## Grow your own "Brain" Flower with our packet of Celosia seeds

The New Zealand Brain Research Institute relies solely on research grants, fundraising and donations.

During March and April we will be sending a packet of Celosia seeds in appreciation of every donation received. You'll be able to grow your own 'brain' flower.

Each seed will grow to a compact 20cm tall with a single flower that looks just like a brain. They can be either yellow, red or pink and love to be either an indoor potted plant or in a sunny spot outdoors in Spring and Summer.

All donations will directly support neurological research right here in Canterbury.

[Donate here](#)



HELP US TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE  
BRAIN AWARENESS MONTH - MARCH 2021



Donate Now

For more information about our work or how to support us contact us at:

Website: [www.nzbri.org](http://www.nzbri.org)

Or email: [info@nzbri.org](mailto:info@nzbri.org)

Join us on [Facebook](#) for up-to-date NZBRI research as well as staff profiles and NZBRI events.

Stay safe

Ngā mihi

The New Zealand Brain Research Institute Team

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