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Further funding success for Menzies MS researchers

Two multiple sclerosis (MS) researchers at the University of Tasmania's Menzies Institute for Medical Research have been awarded funding from MS Research Australia to continue their exceptional work in this field.

Ms Alice Saul has been awarded a postgraduate scholarship of \$78,000 for three years, and Dr Yuan Zhou gained a travel award of more than \$9,000 for one year.

Ms Saul said she was pleased to be able to explore further her research into the effects of diet on MS.

"Many people with MS modify their diet or use an MS-specific diet, but there is a low evidence base that what is eaten has an impact on the disease, progression and symptoms.

"I will examine the role that diet has for people living with MS by working with the AusLong Study – an internationally unique group of people who were recruited soon after they had initial symptoms suggesting they would develop MS," Ms Saul said.

It is hoped that this research will make a significant contribution to those living with MS by providing dietary advice that can enhance their quality of life. In the future, these results might also help to design diets that may be used by people with MS to improve their disease course.

Dr Zhou will also be working to demystify an aspect of MS.

"The prevalence of MS is much higher in females than males, with three-quarters of all people with MS being women," Dr Zhou said.

"This travel grant will support me to work at Harvard Medical School and the Broad Institute to assess possible genetic explanations for the difference in MS between females and males. The findings will potentially lead to personalised points of intervention and treatment by gender."

Dr Matthew Miles, CEO of MS Research Australia, said the organisation was pleased to be supporting these two exciting research projects.

“We are dedicated to accelerating research that improves the lives of people living with MS. Studying how diet and gender impacts the disease will be an important link to better treatment and intervention.”

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