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Scanning and imaging techniques at the forefront of Lewy body dementia research

Grants awarded by dementia charity to drive forward diagnosis and treatment

The Lewy Body Society, a charity dedicated to tackling the second most common form of dementia, has announced the latest recipients of its grants programme. The charity is awarding three grants totalling £366,000 for projects at the University of Cambridge, Newcastle University and Kings College London. It is also seeking applications for its next round of funding.

These grants take the charity's total grants programme to £1.4 million, since it funded its first PhD student in 2007. All the charity's funding is received from voluntary donations and earned income, and it receives no statutory funding.

Jacqueline Cannon, Chief Executive of the Lewy Body Society said:

"As we enter a new decade, we can celebrate all that has been achieved so far in our quest to better understand, treat and one day cure Lewy body dementia. Working with our partners in universities and other charities, we have made huge strides forward in understanding the causes of Lewy body dementia.

"None of this would be possible without our incredible supporters and fundraisers who undertake amazing efforts every year, raising thousands to support our research programme. Thank you to everyone who has taken part in a challenge or donated. You will be helping generations of people affected by Lewy body dementia in future."

Dr Jill Rasmussen, Chair of the Lewy Body Society's Specialist Advisory Committee and Royal College of GPs Clinical Representative for Dementia, said:

"Once again we had a very strong field of applications for our grants programme. It is important that there is an improved understanding of the similarities and differences between the different sub-types of dementia their causes, management and impact on people living with dementia and their carers. The Lewy Body Society is very keen to encourage and support continued research in these areas."

Notes to Editors

Spokespeople are available for interview. For more information please contact Kate Groucutt on lewybody.comms@gmail.com or 07855 383445.

The Lewy Body Society is a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities. The process for awarding grants is run independently by a Specialist Advisory Committee, chaired by Dr Jill Rasmussen and comprised of a panel of experts. Each grant application is considered by the panel and reviewed by independent experts and lay representatives.

For further information visit https://www.lewybody.org/research/lbs-research-strategy/. The 2020 grant round is now open and the deadline for applications is 18th May 2020.

Brief descriptions of the successful projects and the aims of the studies is as follows:

1. A study of neuroimaging and magnetoencephalography biomarkers for prodromal dementia with Lewy bodies

Study Lead: Dr Li Su, ARUK Senior Research Fellow, Department of Psychiatry, University of Cambridge. Study also supported by Windsor Research Unit, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Trust.

Aim of the study

To use new imaging technologies to compare brain structure and function among people with mild-cognitive impairments, to try to identify which patients will go on to develop dementia with Lewy bodies (DLB) or Alzheimer's disease. This will help with earlier diagnosis and identifying those at risk of developing DLB.

2. A PET-MR study of occipital connectivity in DLB

Study lead: Professor John-Paul Taylor, Deputy Dementia Theme lead for the NIHR Newcastle Biomedical Research Centre, Translational and Clinical Research Institute, Newcastle University

Aim of the study

Using advanced imaging on a PET-MR scanner, this study will examine how the visual part of the brain processes signals, so that we can better understand the cause of hallucinations and other visual problems in people with dementia with Lewy bodies. This will help with identifying treatments for these types of symptoms.

3. Investigating the structural signature of dementia with Lewy bodies within the human synapse

Study lead: Dr Oleg Glebov, Lecturer in Old Age Psychiatry, King's College London

Aim of the study

To use high-resolution, advanced microscopy methods to study the degeneration of brain synapses. This will further our understanding of the causes of dementia, and help to identify possible ways to treat it.

Full descriptions of the studies are available on the Lewy Body Society website at https://www.lewybody.org/research.