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Centre for Brain Research
The University of Auckland



Volunteers Wanted!

Centre for Brain Research seeks participants to help fight brain disease

Neuroscientists at The University of Auckland have launched a new database to help further research into brain disease.

The Research Volunteer Register encourages interested members of the public to sign up to help studies at the Centre for Brain Research. When a suitable project comes up that matches their details, participants will be contacted to inform them of the research.

The database will allow scientists to undertake vital research into devastating neurological conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, stroke, Parkinson's disease and motor neurone disease. Research into mental health problems such as depression and addiction is also in progress.

Professor Richard Faull, the Director of the Centre, says, "Human volunteers are essential to enable our researchers to learn more about how the brain works, both normally and in disease. We're asking for people with no neurological conditions to help as well as people with brain disease, as our research projects also need control subjects to verify our results."

Current projects underway include an examination of the best rehabilitation methods for individual stroke survivors, ensuring a personal treatment plan for each patient. The use of anti-depressants after stroke to encourage rehabilitation is another exciting possibility which is being investigated in the Centre. Drug use and addiction to illegal substances like 'P' is also currently being examined for their effects on the brain.

Research methods include MRI scans, Diffusion Tensor Imaging to examine brain connections, Electroencephalography (EEG) to study 'brainwaves' and movement clinics to observe body control.

Dr Cathy Stinear is a stroke researcher and the creator of the Research Volunteer Register. "I work with patients just hours after they've had a stroke, and it really motivates me to do more research into devastating conditions like this," she says. "It struck me that having a resource of willing volunteers to help us in our research would speed up the scientific process, and as a result help us to identify and develop new treatments for brain disease. Working together like this is such a great example of what the Centre for Brain Research can do."

The database can be found on the CBR website:

<http://www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz/faculty/cbr/contact/volunteers.aspx>

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Notes

- One in five New Zealanders will suffer from a brain disease at some point in their lives.
- Stroke is the third biggest killer of New Zealanders.
- Disorders such as stroke, epilepsy, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, Huntington's, multiple sclerosis, motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy and deafness affect hundreds of thousands of New Zealanders every year.
- For more information see: www.cbr.auckland.ac.nz