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Local Pakenham resident receives funding for vital diabetes research

Jennifer Halliday, an Associate Research Fellow at the Australian Centre for Behavioural Research in Diabetes (ACBRD)*, recently received funding from the Diabetes Australia Research Program (DARP) to adapt and trial an innovative consultation tool to improve care for people living with type 1 diabetes.

With one adult in ten projected to develop diabetes by 2040 worldwide, there is an ever growing need for all types of diabetes-related research. Latest data from the National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS) reveals that diabetes prevalence is continuously growing, with more than 328,000 Victorians currently registered on the scheme. In the last year alone, more than 28,500 Victorians were diagnosed with diabetes, or almost 80 every day.

Research is the key to making advances in the prevention and management of all types of diabetes and in the search for a cure. The 2019 DARP grant awardees are from renowned organisations such as Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute, Deakin University, Monash University, the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, St Vincent's Institute of Medical Research and University of Melbourne.

Jennifer Halliday's research will adapt and trial a new consultation tool to be used in Australian diabetes clinics. This tool will promote a person-centred and holistic approach to type 1 diabetes healthcare, which means consideration of both the medical and psychological aspects of living with diabetes. The tool will enable health professionals to quickly and routinely assess for problems such as impaired awareness of hypoglycaemia (low blood glucose) symptoms and diabetes distress. These are both common problems, experienced by about 1 in 5 people with type 1 diabetes. However, they are rarely addressed in clinical practice, and these problems can have a strong negative impact on the person's wellbeing and quality of life. They can also be a barrier to diabetes self-care, which is fundamental to achieving better clinical outcomes and preventing or delaying serious diabetes-related complications, such as blindness, amputations or stroke. Ms Halliday's research is the first step towards national implementation of this consultation tool and an important step towards achieving the Australian National Diabetes Strategy. The project is a collaboration between The Australian Centre for Behavioural Research in Diabetes, Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute, The National Association of Diabetes Centres, The Royal Melbourne Hospital, and international colleagues.

Ms Halliday joined the ACBRD in 2011 and her research has focused on the psychological wellbeing of adults with diabetes. From 2012 to 2016, Jennifer was co-ordinator of the 4-year National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS) Mental Health and Diabetes National Development Programme.

Quote from Jennifer Halliday

"I feel privileged to receive this DARP award, which will enable me to conduct this important research aiming to improve the healthcare experiences of adults with type 1 diabetes. I strongly

believe that it is essential to find and create new opportunities to better support people with diabetes, as impaired awareness of hypoglycaemia symptoms and diabetes distress can affect every aspect of the person's life, health, and wellbeing.

About DARP

Diabetes Victoria is a proud supporter of the Diabetes Australia Research Program (DARP), which was established in 1987. The research program funds basic, clinical, psycho-social and translational research into type 1, type 2 and gestational diabetes. Each year, outstanding research projects are selected through a merit-based, competitive, peer review process.

“Consistent with Victoria’s brilliant reputation for world class medical research, researchers in our state have dominated the 2019 DARP grants rounds – making a real difference to people living with, or at risk of, diabetes,” said Craig Bennett CEO of Diabetes Victoria. “The 2019 grant awardees like Jennifer will undertake timely and important research in Australia, given that diabetes is the single greatest burden of disease in this country.”

For 2019, 52 projects were selected from the 320 applications received, bringing the total DARP funding to \$3.6 million for 2019, \$1.4 million of which was contributed by Diabetes Victoria. Among the recipients are 21 Victorian diabetes researchers who will receive a General Grant of up to \$60,000 each.

The full list of the Victorian grant awardees of the 2019 DARP funding round can be found here: <http://bit.ly/DARP2019>

* The Australian Centre for Behavioural Research in Diabetes was established in 2010 as a partnership for better health between Diabetes Victoria and Deakin University.

*We **support, empower and campaign** for all Victorians affected by, or at risk of, diabetes.*

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