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## **Foundation boosts heart research funding in a bid to save more lives**

North Shore Heart Research Foundation's financial commitment to heart research has increased to \$4.2 million as it awards grants to Royal North Shore Hospital researchers.

With heart disease still looming as the world's biggest killer - claiming 17 million lives a year\* - the need for advancements in the prevention and treatment of heart disease has never been more pressing.

The funding, committed until mid 2012, includes seed-funding for exploring innovative and potentially groundbreaking heart research ideas and PhD scholarships.

According to Foundation CEO, Derek Minett, given the global financial crisis, this is a remarkable start to the year and is testament to the generosity and dedication of the Foundation's supporters.

"The Foundation is expanding its research program with four research grants in a bid to increase efforts to beat heart disease," Mr Minett said

"The role of the Foundation is two-fold: to fund research that helps Australians manage their heart health," he said, "and that helps reduce disability and death rates from heart disease through improved diagnosis and treatment techniques."

"Because funding for medical research is highly competitive and scarce," he said, "the Foundation prioritises its grants for researchers to test the most promising novel ideas based on their day to day clinical work."

Two of the Foundation's researchers – Dr Ravinay Bhindi and Professor Helge Rasmussen – have also been awarded significant grants by the National Health and Medical Research Council starting in 2010.

\*World Health Organisation ([http://www.who.int/topics/cardiovascular\\_diseases/en/](http://www.who.int/topics/cardiovascular_diseases/en/))

### **The Foundation's 2010 grant recipients**

**Researcher and PhD scholar, Dr Levi Bassin** is investigating the basis of ECG changes in hypothermia and stroke which can mimic heart attack and lead to life-threatening heart rhythms. By enhancing knowledge of electrical changes in the heart, the research will aid the development of faster diagnosis and better treatment for these conditions.

**Researcher and PhD scholar, Brad McEwen** is investigating the potential role of omega-3 in the prevention of major vascular disease – in particular the effect of omega-3 fish oil on modifying platelet function and reducing hypercoagulation (as associated with cardiovascular disease conditions).

**Researcher and PhD scholar, Dr Kevyan Karimi Galougahi** is investigating the changes in the sodium-potassium pump in the heart muscle in diabetes and heart failure. This could lead to developing novel treatments for heart failure and possibly provide protection against the negative cardiovascular effects of diabetes.

**Researcher, Dr Chia-Chi Liu** is investigating the relationship between insulin and the sodium-potassium pump function. This research has great potential for developing drug therapies for various forms of heart disease.

### **About the Foundation**

North Shore Heart Research Foundation funds medical research carried out by cardiologists and other health professionals at Sydney's Royal North Shore Hospital. It depends entirely on the support of the community.

The Foundation is currently funding a broad spectrum of innovative research projects, such as repairing damaged hearts with stem cells, identifying and managing triggers for heart disease (like bereavement and stress), improving cardiac diagnostics with MRI, improving heart function in pre-term babies, and more.

The Foundation also funds the Chair of Cardiology, held by Professor Helge Rasmussen and the Chair of Preventative Cardiology, held by Professor Geoffrey Tofler, at the University of Sydney; as well as providing financial support to the North Shore Cardiovascular Education Centre for cardiac patient rehabilitation.

For further information about the Foundation visit [heartresearch.com.au](http://heartresearch.com.au)

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### **Photo opportunities**

2010 grant recipients and Foundation CEO, Derek Minett, are available for photos upon request.

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