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New funding to accelerate research into sudden cardiac death

Centenary Institute researchers in the Agnes Ginges Centre for Molecular Cardiology have secured \$2.7 million in funding for nationally significant research into cardiovascular disease and sudden cardiac death.

Responsible for over 25,000 Australian deaths each year, sudden cardiac death is the unexpected death of a seemingly healthy person by heart failure.

The funding – through the Australian Government’s National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Investigator Grants scheme – will support the research programs of Professor Chris Semsarian AM and Dr Jessica Orchard.

Professor Chris Semsarian AM. *Head, Agnes Ginges Centre for Molecular Cardiology and cardiologist at RPAH, University of Sydney. Awarded \$2.1 million. Grant title: Translating genomics into improved care of inherited heart disease and sudden death families.*

Professor Semsarian will use the funding to investigate genetic errors that can lead to heart muscle and rhythm disorders, which can ultimately cause sudden cardiac death in the young. His research will include the identification of genetic causes of disease, how these genetic errors lead to heart disease and sudden death, and how this new knowledge can be used to improve the care of patients with inherited heart diseases and to help prevent sudden death.

Dr Jessica Orchard. *Research Fellow. Agnes Ginges Centre for Molecular Cardiology. Awarded \$635,000. Grant title: Screening of athletes for cardiovascular disease and prevention of sudden death.*

Dr Orchard will use the funding to initiate a research program which will improve the quality, accuracy and implementation of cardiac screening of athletes to help prevent sudden cardiac death. This will involve the development of Australia’s first national registry of elite athlete screened electrocardiograms (ECGs). ECGs record electrical signals from the heart and can detect heart abnormalities that may lead to sudden cardiac death.

Professor Mathew Vadas AO, Executive Director at the Centenary Institute, congratulated both researchers on their funding success.

“I give my congratulations to our two successful grant recipients – Professor Semsarian and Dr Orchard. This success acknowledges their expertise and dedication to helping prevent sudden cardiac death in our communities and reflects the significant cardiovascular research being undertaken here at the Institute. I look forward to seeing the outcomes of this valuable research,” Professor Vadas said.

Supporting the research programs of outstanding investigators, [NHMRC Investigator Grants](#) enable innovative research that lead to health and medical advances for all Australians.

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Images:

Professor Chris Semsarian AM

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KHCzWpdxvsjMF0lgegeOMCIICr3-DNZ3/>

Dr Jessica Orchard

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/158NldK-oFyrsm-GlqQo0AJyJolKjWnwH/view?>

For all media and interview enquiries, please contact

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About the Centenary Institute

The Centenary Institute is a world-leading independent medical research institute, closely affiliated to the University of Sydney and the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. Our research focuses on three key areas: cancer, inflammation and cardiovascular disease. Our strength lies in uncovering disease mechanisms and applying this knowledge to improve diagnostics and treatments for patients.

For more information about the Centenary Institute, visit centenary.org.au