

MEDIA RELEASE

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Centenary researchers awarded more than \$2m in Ideas Grants

Centenary Institute researchers have successfully secured over \$2 million in combined funding from the Federal Government in the latest round of National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Ideas Grants.

The grants will support essential medical research into vascular (blood vessel) and heart muscle diseases, aiming to uncover new approaches for patient treatment.

Successful Centenary Institute scientists and their research:

Professor Mathias Francois. *Head, Centre for Rare Diseases and Gene Therapy. Awarded \$1,218,773.*

Grant title: Targeting endothelial trans-differentiation in vascular lesions.

Professor Francois will use the funding to delve into the molecular intricacies of endothelial cells, the cells lining blood vessels. He aims to pioneer the development of innovative therapies tailored to address blood vessel disorders present in conditions such as angiosarcoma (a rare cancer originating in blood vessels), hemangioma (tumours characterised by abnormal blood vessels) and melanoma.

Dr Daniel Hesselson. *Head, Centre for Biomedical AI. Awarded \$956,358.*

Grant title: Enhancing heart repair to treat cardiomyopathies: Directed evolution of human KLF1 to increase cardioregenerative potency.

Dr Hesselson will use the funding to pioneer an innovative therapy for cardiomyopathies, a type of heart muscle disease making it harder for the heart to pump blood properly. His approach involves harnessing the regenerative capabilities of a protein known as KLF1 to effectively coordinate the repair of damaged heart tissue.

Professor Marc Pellegrini, Centenary Institute Executive Director, congratulated the two successful grant recipients.

“I commend both Professor Francois and Dr Hesselson for securing this significant funding for their crucial projects. This is an outstanding result for two superb researchers which will drive discoveries that help people live longer, healthier lives,” said Professor Pellegrini.

[NHMRC Ideas Grants](#) support innovative and creative research in the health and medical fields, from discovery to implementation.

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Images:

Professor Mathias Francois:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hh3EjyXw8lBykTseLGadCU3lHp6sO-3H/view?usp=drive_link

Dr Daniel Hesselton:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rNg5VzTDSBiYJTsWZfGUrnQs6olB7HTw/view?usp=drive_link

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 spans the critical areas of cancer, cardiovascular disease, rare diseases, inflammation, infectious diseases, healthy ageing and biomedical AI. 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