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International dementia research collaboration to address key health challenge in Australia and Japan

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Funding for researchers to build international networks and develop long-term careers focusing on dementia research

Three expert teams in Australia will share $1.5 million to undertake research into causes of dementia through projects funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

NHMRC is partnering with the Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development (AMED) to increase the understanding of dementia and improve health outcomes for people living with the condition.

Dr Chien-Hsiung (Alan) Yu, from the Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health at the University of Melbourne, will work with collaborators from the University of Tokyo and Niigata University to investigate how tau protein build-up triggers neuron death in the brain and develop therapies for preventing this damaging protein cascade.

Dr Yijun Pan, also from the Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health at the University of Melbourne, will work with collaborators from Tohoku University and the National Center for Geriatrics and Gerontology to focus on accurate diagnosis, potential therapeutic targets and modifiable risk factors for patients living with vascular or frontotemporal dementia, with the goal to improve quality of life of people living with dementia.

Dr Quan Huynh, from Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute, will work with collaborators from Gunma University and Shinshu University to test the feasibility and effectiveness of an innovative model of care that will enable health care professionals to screen patients with cognitive impairment and heart failure, aiming to improve cognition and reduce the risk of dementia and cardiovascular events.

The NHMRC-AMED 202 Collaborative Dementia Research Scheme focuses on early career researchers and aims to improve understanding of the many potential causes of dementia and modifiable lifestyle risk and protective factors that may prevent or delay dementia’s onset.