Grand Challenge appeal will fund pioneering brain tumour research in Portsmouth

Friday 4 December, 2015

Hitchin's Dr Hadwen Trust has launched a charity challenge in Portsmouth to fund pioneering brain tumour research into facilitating treatments that can cross the 'blood-brain barrier' giving hope to the thousands of patients diagnosed each year.

Professor Geoffrey Pilkington, director of the Brain Tumour Research Centre of Excellence at the University of Portsmouth, has developed the world's first all-human blood-brain barrier model. Together with his team, he is investigating how drug treatments can be delivered more effectively to improve outcomes for brain tumour patients.

This barrier forms a protective envelope around the brain but, in protecting against dangerous toxins, it also prevents the effective delivery of standard cancer treatments.

Now Brain Tumour Research is teaming up with the Dr Hadwen Trust in launching the Grand Challenge which aims to raise £180,000 to fund a three year project investigating the blood-brain barrier.

Dr Kay Miller, Group Head of Operations at the Dr Hadwen Trust, said: *"Many of the drugs which may be very effective against cancers in other parts of the body simply won't work against brain tumours because the drugs cannot access them. This is due to the efficient working of the blood-brain barrier. A number of novel technologies are currently being developed which could assist the drugs to cross into the brain. While most studies in this area use animals to assess whether the technologies work, this is an inefficient and costly process. Therefore, the research group at the University of Portsmouth has developed an exciting model of the blood-brain barrier, using human cells grown in a petri dish that will allow for the rapid screening of these technologies."*

It is the first time that the Dr Hadwen Trust, which promotes the development of techniques and procedures to replace the use of animals in biomedical research, has teamed up with Brain Tumour Research, which funds a network of Research Centres of Excellence. The Grand Challenge is inviting individuals, their friends, families and colleagues to set about raising £1,000, or as much as they can, for the project.

The Grand Challenge has already attracted support from actor Peter Egan, seen recently in ITV's gritty drama Unforgotten, and actress Anna Chancellor (Kavanagh QC and Four Weddings and a Funeral). Guests at the launch event at the laboratory on Thursday 3rd December met the scientists and learned more about the ground-breaking work taking place.

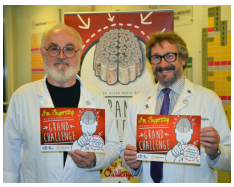
Brain tumours kill more children and adults under the age of 40 than any other cancer yet just 1% of the national spend on cancer research has been allocated to this devastating disease. Brain Tumour Research is striving to fund a network of seven dedicated research centres whilst challenging the government and larger cancer charities to invest more in brain tumour research.

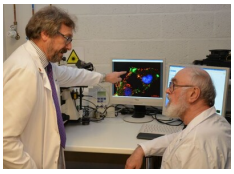
For more information on the Grand Challenge please go to:
http://www.drhadwentrust.org/grandchallenge/grand-challenge

An e-petition calling for more funding for research into brain tumours has already received more than 30,000 signatures. We need 100,000 signatures by February 2016 for the issue of lack of funding for brain tumour research to be considered for debate by Parliament.
https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/105560

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The Dr Hadwen Trust

T. 01462 436819
E. g.reilly@drhadwentrust.org
W. https://www.drhadwentrust.org

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