



**International Science Symposium**  
on  
**Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome ME/CFS**  
3-4 December 2010

**Population Health and Neuroimmunology Unit**  
**Faculty of Health Sciences and Medicine**  
**Bond University, Gold Coast, Australia**

in collaboration with  
**Alison Hunter Memorial Foundation, Sydney, Australia**  
<http://www.ahmf.org/>

## **Communiqué**

The International ME Research Collaboration has been established comprising distinguished researchers and clinicians in neuroscience, immunology, primary care and public health.



**Alison Hunter Memorial Foundation**

# International ME Research Collaboration (IMERC)

## ME Science Symposium Organising Committee:

- **Dr Donald Staines**, Associate Professor, Bond University, Public Health Physician, Queensland, Australia.
- **Dr Sonya Marshall-Gradisnik**, Associate Professor, Biochemistry, Bond University, Queensland, Australia.
- **Professor Mieke Van Driel**, Professor of General Practice and Associate Dean (Research), Bond University, Queensland, Australia.
- **Christine Hunter**, AM, Alison Hunter Memorial Foundation, Sydney, Australia.

## Speakers:

- **Dr Anne Boullerne**, Assistant Professor, Department of Anesthesiology, University of Illinois, Chicago, USA.
- **Ekua Brenu**, Faculty of Health and Sciences and Medicine, Bond University, Queensland, Australia.
- **Associate Professor Monica Carson**, Director, Center for Glial-Neuronal Interactions, University of California, Riverside, California, USA.
- **Professor Kenny L De Meirleir**, MD PhD Internal Medicine /Cardiology, Professor of Physiology, Pathophysiology and Medicine, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussel Belgium.
- **Professor Douglas Feinstein**, Professor Department of Anesthesiology University of Illinois, Chicago, USA.
- **Professor Mary Anne Fletcher**, Professor of Medicine, Microbiology/Immunology and Psychology, University of Miami, Miller School of Medicine, Florida, USA.
- **Professor Doina Ganea**, Earle H. Spaulding Professor and Chair, Department of Microbiology & Immunology. Temple University School of Medicine, Philadelphia, USA.
- **Professor Nancy Klimas**, Professor of Medicine, Psychology, Microbiology and Immunology, Miller School of Medicine, University of Miami, Florida, USA.
- **Dr Richard Kwiatek**, Lyell McEwin Hospital, Adelaide, SA, Australia.
- **Professor Barrie P Marmion AO**, Hanson Institute of Medical Research, Adelaide, SA, Australia.
- **Dr Dominic O'Donovan**, John Bonnett Clinical Laboratories, Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge, UK.
- **Professor V Hugh Perry**, Professor of Experimental Neuropathology, University of Southampton, Southampton, UK.
- **Dr Daniel Peterson**, Sierra Internal Medicine Associates, Incline Village, Nevada, USA.
- **Dr Olga Sukocheva**, Division of Surgery, Flinders University, South Australia, Australia.
- **Professor Warren P Tate**, Department of Biochemistry and Associate Dean (Research), Health Science Division, Dunedin University of Otago, New Zealand.

## Delegates:

- **Dr Norman Hohl**, General Practitioner, Southport, Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia.
- **Mr Ross Humphreys**, Chair, Population Health And Neuroimmunology Unit (PHANU), Queensland, Australia.
- **Dr Don Lewis**, General Practitioner, Donvale, Victoria, Australia.
- **Associate Professor Brett Lidbury**, Fellow of The Medical Advances Without Animals Trust and Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.
- **Dr Nicole Phillips**, Psychiatrist, Medical Editor, ME/ CFS Australia (Victoria).
- **Dr Ellie Stein**, Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of Calgary, Canada.
- **Dr Rosamund Vallings**, General Practitioner, Auckland, New Zealand.
- **Professor Tom Wileman**, Director of Institute of Biomedical and Clinical Sciences, Norwich Medical School, University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK.
- **Susan Brookes**, Board Member, Alison Hunter Memorial Foundation.
- **Annette Leggo**, Board Member, Alison Hunter Memorial Foundation.
- **Simon Molesworth AM QC**, Chair, Alison Hunter Memorial Foundation.

## **The International ME Research Collaboration (IMERC)**

confirms the strong and convincing scientific evidence of immune dysregulation in ME/CFS. Research will be encouraged into the blood-brain and other neural barriers, glial and neural cell histopathology, and neurotransmitter function including recently discovered neuropeptide function.

### **IMERC identified key priorities:**

- The name myalgic encephalomyelitis ME would be adopted to better reflect the science and seriousness of the clinical picture in preference to the misleading label of chronic fatigue syndrome CFS.
- There is a need for internationally accepted post-mortem protocols and specific ME Brain and Tissue Banks aligned with the proposed development at Essex Neurosciences Queen's Hospital, Essex, and Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, UK.
- There is an urgent need to build capacity in both clinical services and biomedical research examining pathomechanisms of ME. The group identified significant discrimination experienced by people with ME as well as the derived stigma for health professionals who care for them and those who conduct related research.
- There is a need to develop national ME patient registries with long term documentation of the disease course and linked as an international resource.
- In the absence of approved drugs for the treatment of ME the "off label" use of appropriate drugs is endorsed by clinicians experienced in treating patients with ME.
- The Canadian ME/CFS Consensus Guidelines (Carruthers et al 2003) for diagnosis and treatment should be adopted internationally.

**IMERC** will pursue a vigorous exciting ME research agenda including neuroimaging of the brain, development and validation of biomarkers, immune and gastrointestinal function studies, long term monitoring of clinical presentations and experimental animal models.

**Alison Hunter Memorial Foundation proposes to support biennial IMERC Symposia.**

### **For Media Enquiries:**

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