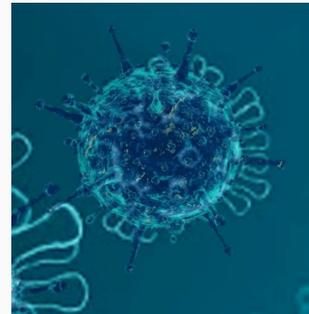


Kia ora

Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter, with updates on our research, our staff and our return to 'normal'. During lockdown we were able to continue most of our work from home. Now in level 2, we've returned to our premises at 66 Stewart St and our clinics are up and running again although our face-to-face research appointments are still on hold.

### CoronaVirus Research Response

For over 12 years NZBRI has followed hundreds of people with Parkinson's disease and control participants without Parkinson's through our longitudinal study. During New Zealand's Covid-19 Alert Levels 3 and 4 our researchers conducted an online and phone survey, checking to see if the change in social and physical activities during lockdown impacted Parkinson's symptoms. The response has been fantastic and we're in awe of our research participants and their constant willingness to help research Parkinson's disease. Results will be out in the coming months and we can't wait to update you.



### Spotlight on Research - Genetics in Parkinson's

It used to be thought that genes had no role in Parkinson's, but this notion is changing. The research community is still learning about how our DNA and changes within it contribute to our risk of developing Parkinson's. At NZBRI, we have been collecting DNA from research participants since 2012, and now have samples from more than 300 people with Parkinson's and approximately 60 control participants. We work closely with local geneticist Prof. Martin Kennedy and his team to make sure these DNA samples are contributing to the advancement of our knowledge of the genetics of Parkinson's.

[Read more about our latest results and some exciting collaborations on our website.](#)

## Researcher Profile - Mustafa Almuqbel

It's rare to find people with both research and clinical MRI experience so we're very lucky to have Mustafa on the NZBRI team. His current research focuses predominantly on exploring non-invasive biomarkers for cognitive impairment in Parkinson's disease, which means he's using MRI images to look for progressive brain changes in Parkinson's patients. Being non-invasive, this is safer and easier for patients to manage. When he's not in the office or imaging people he plays volleyball, swims, runs and looks after his three young children.



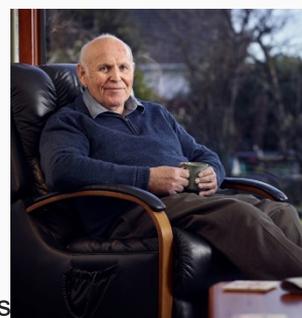
## Canterbury to benefit from Braintree Wellness Centre

A state-of-the-art centre for people with Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis and dementia is to be built in Papanui. The [Braintree Wellness Centre](#) is a part of MS and Parkinson's Canterbury and Dementia Canterbury. This world-class facility is right on our doorstep and we're looking forward to some strong collaborations with them.



## Shoutout to one of our longest-serving volunteers

Diagnosed with Parkinson's disease at just 58 years old, Richard found the biggest lifestyle change was taking early retirement. In the eleven years since then, gardening, landscape painting and gym classes keep him busy. His philosophy is "do things you are positive about and enjoy doing."



For the last ten years he has met with the longitudinal Parkinson's study research team and repeats cognitive and physical assessments done previously in order to record any changes over time. From Richard's perspective he has annual contact with top Parkinson's doctors and researchers and he enjoys doing whatever he can to help other people with Parkinson's. He knows what it's like and says the more research that can be done will help provide new treatments, knowledge and options for future generations.

He'd encourage other people to sign up. "Go ahead and do it, we all have a contribution to make. There are so many people out there who want to learn, and you can improve your situation along the way."

## Opera Meets Art

Sadly, due to the circumstances surrounding COVID-19 we had to postpone our annual Opera Meets Art event in March. Run by the Friends of the Brain Research Institute, this is normally a major fundraising event for us. As a charity and the only independent brain research institute in New Zealand, we rely on such community support to continue our work. Hopefully we'll be able to bring this event to you later in the coming year. In the meantime, if you are able to directly support our research, education, and clinical activities with even a small donation, we would greatly appreciate it.



[Donate Now](#)

Join us on [Facebook](#) for up-to-date NZBRI research as well as staff profiles and NZBRI events.

Stay safe

Ngā mihi

The New Zealand Brain Research Institute Team



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