

Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing (CHeBA) researchers received close to \$6.5 million in grant funding from the National Health and Medical Research Council.

Announced by Federal Minister for Health Sussan Ley, this grant will allow a team of researchers to collaborate on dementia research and focus on its effective translation over the next five years. Ms Ley said the project will be the largest clinical trial in the world for people aged 55-68 to test online tools designed to reduce their risk of dementia.



“While there is currently no cure for dementia, Australia is a world leader in the disease’s research and progress towards effective treatments,” she said.

Lead investigator Scientia Professor Henry Brodaty, Co-Director of the Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing said the ‘Maintain Your Brain’ trial will recruit 18,000 people. Half of the trial participants will be given information on managing dementia risk factors, while the rest will get extra support through online tools connecting them with medical specialists and tailored health interventions.

★ Professor Brodaty said there remains a lack of understanding in the community regarding dementia risk factors, such as lack of physical activity, obesity, depression, smoking and excessive consumption of alcohol.

“If older people increased their efforts to address these risks factors by just by 5 or 10%, several million people could keep dementia at bay,” Professor Brodaty said.

“The people in our trial will be young enough still to be able to prevent the accumulation of more pathology in their brain, and old enough that we can study the outcomes to benefit future generations,” he said.

★ “The real attraction of this program, if it works, is that it could be delivered internationally via the internet.”

Twenty specialists from around Australia will be involved in this study including experts in exercise, cognitive training, diet, IT platform design, general practice, research design and prevention, hypertension and depression, and consumer representation. Alzheimer’s Australia Ambassador, Ita Buttrose, is patron of the “Maintain Your Brain” study.

“‘Maintain Your Brain’ is a significant project with the potential to help people understand how dementia prevention strategies could change men’s and women’s lives for the better,” Ms Buttrose said.