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Media Statement

DIABETES GRANT HELPS WA TEAM RACE TO CREATE NEW TYPE 2 TREATMENT

West Australian researchers racing to create a new treatment to prevent and protect people from the potentially life-threatening complications of type 2 diabetes have been awarded new funding to fast-track their quest.

WA's peak diabetes research funding group, Diabetes Research WA, has revealed that Associate Professor Kevin Pflieger and his Perth-based team will receive \$60,000 to progress their work into a molecule called RAGE (the Receptor for Advanced Glycation End-products).

A/Professor Pflieger said RAGE was a molecule that sat in the membrane surrounding cells that were injured or stressed.

"As RAGE is only present when cells are in this injured or stressed mode – which happens in type 2 diabetes – it's a key target that we believe we can hone in on to possibly prevent and definitely use to help fight the health effects of this condition," he explained.

"With our collaborators, we've discovered a new way in which this molecule is activated, triggering a cascade of signalling in cells that leads to inflammation and cell injury, and we've found a way to inhibit this process which should, in turn, limit the complications of type 2 developing, so it's incredibly exciting."

Diabetes Research WA executive director Sherl Westlund congratulated A/Professor Pflieger.

"This project could be a significant game-changer in the treatment of type 2 diabetes as there remains an unmet need for innovative treatment strategies to manage this condition, and shows how Western Australia is at the forefront of advances in this field," she said.

The work will also harness powerful bioluminescence resonance energy transfer (BRET) technology, developed at the University of Western Australia, that A/Professor Pflieger is well-known for using in his cutting-edge research.

The project is being done in collaboration with leading diabetes researcher Professor Merlin Thomas from Australia's Monash University.

Diabetes Australia states that every day, 280 Australians develop diabetes – or one every 5 minutes.

Including an estimated half a million undiagnosed type 2 diabetes cases, 1.7 million Australians have diabetes and this number is growing at a rate faster than other chronic diseases such as heart disease and cancer.

Type 2 diabetes accounts for 85% of all diabetes and is increasing.

For more details, head to www.diabetesresearchwa.com.au

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