

World Class Diabetes Researcher Awarded Top Australian Prize!!

Melbourne scientist A/Prof Josephine Forbes recognised by Commonwealth Health Minister

How might lowering your blood pressure reduce your wrinkles?

More than 1.5 million Australians are affected by diabetes! Researchers predict that in the future one quarter of the population will develop diabetes within 10 to 15 years of turning 40. Diabetes can lead to kidney disease, heart disease and blindness. To date, treatments slow the progression of the disease, they **do not** prevent it from occurring. A/Prof Josephine Forbes from the Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute, Melbourne, is dedicated to preventing these alarming statistics becoming reality.

A/Prof Forbes' research investigates how to prevent excess sugar molecules attaching to proteins in the human body, a process known as glycation, which is akin to "caramelisation." Glycation happens as a natural part of ageing, leading to deterioration of the body's organs (including the kidneys, skin and blood vessels), and is the cause of wrinkles. *Interestingly this process occurs at rates 50 times greater in diabetics than non-diabetics.*

Through her internationally recognised research, A/Prof Forbes has identified that blood pressure lowering drugs are effective in the fight against diabetes. *"Our preliminary studies show these sticky sugar-proteins can be reduced by the use of one of the common, safe human blood pressure treatments,"* says Dr Forbes. Discovering how the blood pressure drug reduces the sugary proteins will open the doors for designing even more effective drugs to eliminate diabetes, and possibly even slowing down the ageing process in non-diabetics. A/Prof Forbes would also like to determine whether diabetes might be reversed, as well as stopped in its tracks!

A/Prof Forbes' team is also studying how to predict those most at risk of developing diabetic complications in order to initiate preventative interventions.

The Hon Mark Butler MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Ageing, will present A/Prof Josephine Forbes The Commonwealth Health Minister's Award for Excellence in Health and Medical Research at the ASMR Medical Research Dinner tonight, at the Hilton on the Park, Melbourne.

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