

MEDIA RELEASE – Embargoed until 30th May 2012

QUEENSLAND... SUNNY AND SMART!

ANNUAL ASMR QUEENSLAND MEDICAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE
St Leo's College, University of Queensland, 30th May

ASMR Queensland brings together the best and brightest young health and medical researchers at a multidisciplinary meeting which covers everything from infectious diseases through gene therapy to virtual interventions!

Mitii MEANS MOVE IT TO IMPROVE IT!

Young children with Cerebral Palsy (CP) targeted for web-based training program

Louise Mitchell, a physiotherapist from the Queensland Cerebral Palsy and Rehabilitation Research Centre, is exploring a web-based virtual reality intervention called Move it to improve it or Mitii. The benefits of regular physical activity for children and adolescents with Cerebral Palsy are known but these children are less active than typically developing peers.

- Evidence suggests *that internet-delivered programs or active video games* are becoming increasingly popular and may be a simple and cost effective way to deliver intensive therapy, remotely in the participants own home.

Louise hopes to turn sedentary screen time into increased physical activity potentially reducing secondary health complications associated with physical inactivity!

A NEW WAY TO FIGHT BACTERIAL RESISTANCE

“Shape shifting” the bugs

Bacterial resistance to antibiotics is a rising concern in the medical world with some bacterial infections resistant to every treatment available. The very drugs that target bacteria survival create an evolutionary pressure to resist destruction. Wilko Duprez and the team from the Institute for Molecular Biosciences are working on a project that aims not to kill infectious bacteria but to render them harmless by ‘deactivating’ only the infectious factors. *To reduce evolutionary pressure, the aim is to keep infectious proteins misshapen and unable to perform their function.*

MORE THAN SMOKE AND MIRRORS

Mindful over movement

Mirror-boxes can help treat phantom limb pain, complex regional pain syndrome and stroke.

What happens is, a patient places their sore or non-working hand behind a mirror, they look into the mirror, focusing on the reflection of their good hand to create the illusion the hidden hand is healed.

To better understand how mirrors help people recover from stroke, Lieszel Plumbe and the team from the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, UQ, had 20 healthy people train to use chopsticks with their left hand using a mirror-box

...it didn't work any better than training without a mirror!

It could be that the mirror-box benefits stroke patients, not by helping them learn skills with their problem hand, but by helping them be more aware of it.

ASTHMA, STEM CELLS AND DUST MITES

Regenerative Medicine

Khang Duong and the team from Mater Medical Research Institute are looking at the therapeutic capacity of mesenchymal stromal cell (MSCs) treatments on models of asthma induced by House Dust Mites.

- The aim is to use stem cell therapy, not only as an anti-inflammatory but also a long –term, tolerance enhancing therapy to reduces the body’s immune responses to environmental allergens without the side-effects of steroid medications.
- MSCs are a great candidate for this type of cellular therapy and may provide a much-needed breakthrough in asthma treatments.

Interview and photo opportunities

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