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New hope with new diabetes technology

Diabetes Victoria welcomes the announcement of funding for a new trial that hopes to show an artificial pancreas can significantly improve health outcomes for people living with advanced kidney disease, which is one of the most debilitating complications for people living with type 1 diabetes.

The trial, led by Professor David O’Neal, Senior Endocrinologist at St Vincent’s Hospital Melbourne, has been awarded the highly sought-after Diabetes Australia Millennium Award – Type 1 Diabetes, to help support the project.

This prestigious national award comes with \$150,000 funding that will assist Professor O’Neal and his team in progressing this vital research being led by St Vincent’s Hospital Melbourne.

The project is one of the first underway through the University of Melbourne’s new Australian Centre for Accelerating Diabetes Innovations (ACADI), which has affiliated centres located at three major Victorian hospitals including one based at St Vincent’s Hospital’s Fitzroy campus.

The national body for diabetes, Diabetes Australia is one of the leading funders of diabetes research in Australia and are committed to helping world-leading researchers like Professor O’Neal and his team at St Vincent’s Hospital Melbourne to make the breakthroughs that save and transform lives.

Kidney disease is a common diabetes-related complication, and it is hoped the technology being explored through this world-first research could provide renewed hope for people living with both conditions.

With more than 270,000 Australians living with diabetes and kidney disease some people will progress to advanced stages of the disease, and therefore may require dialysis.

The hope is that the artificial pancreas system Professor O’Neal and his team are researching will help people better manage their blood glucose levels while undergoing treatment for kidney disease and that this improves their overall health and quality of life.

Professor David O’Neal said managing glucose levels in people with advanced kidney disease could be challenging.

“When a person’s kidney function is impaired, it can make it harder to manage glucose levels. On top of this, if they progress to dialysis that can present new challenges. Even the different types of dialysis can have different impacts on blood glucose levels,” Professor O’Neal said.

“A Closed Loop system, sometimes referred to as an artificial pancreas, continuously monitors a person’s glucose levels and then provides rapid acting insulin to keep those levels within the target range.

“We think this could be the flexible and responsive insulin delivery system that makes it easier for a person to manage their glucose levels and improve their quality of life,” he said.

Diabetes Victoria CEO, Glen Noonan said, “Diabetes is the fastest-growing chronic condition in Australia and, with around 80 Victorians developing diabetes every day. Diabetes technology is one of the most exciting areas of diabetes research and we hope this project will help expand the ways it can support people,” he said.

As the leading charity and peak consumer body working to reduce the impact of diabetes in the Victorian community, Diabetes Victoria has been an active, member-based organisation for nearly 70 years.

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