

The Scientists

Ruth Musgrove  download



Every time we move, such as when we walk or run, our brain sends messages to our muscles, telling them what to do. When no messages are sent we are still. We do not have to spend time thinking about each of our movements, our brain automatically tells the muscles when to move and when to be still.

Imagine if one day your leg did not move when you wanted it to, or your arm would move when you wanted it to be still. This is what happens to people with Parkinson's disease. The brain cells (neurons) that control motor function (movement) begin to die. People with Parkinson's disease find it hard to move, but once they have started moving they find it hard to stop. In Australia, we are living longer and the population is aging, Parkinson's

disease is becoming more common and there is no cure. I study the neurons that degenerate in Parkinson's disease so we can find out how to prevent the disease from progressing, and one day find a treatment.

How did I become interested in medical research?

I was aware that Australian scientists had made great improvements in understanding and preventing or treating many common diseases. When I was going through uni, I worked in aged care and saw that there were no effective prevention or treatment for dementia or other neurodegenerative diseases. I wanted to find out more about these diseases of the brain, to improve our understanding, and ultimately to help find treatments or ways of preventing disease progression. In the future I hope to continue researching Parkinson's disease and seeing improvements in the quality of life for older Australians.

TOP | HOME

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