Hello and Goodbye!

We welcomed a number of new faces: Nathan Bradshaw, Jessica Hazelton, Annu Mothakunnel, and Angela Scharfenberg (Research Assistants); Tenielle Clinch and Elle Elan (Genetic Counsellors); Melissa Abela (Brain Donor Coordinator); Siddarth Ramanan, Nadine Anne Wilson, and Jill Long (PhD students); Natalie Southi, Shirin Salimi, and Cheng Liang (undergraduate students) joined us in 2016.

We said goodbye this year to Sicong Tu, PhD student, to our research assistants Naomi Daveson and Nadene Dermody, as well as Lauren Bartley, our brain donor coordinator. Cristian Leyton is currently overseas as part of his NHMRC postdoctoral fellowship.

International visitors this year included Prof Akira Midorikawa (Chuo University, Japan), Dr Tim Van Langenhove (Antwerp University, Belgium), Prof Michael Kopelman (Kings College London), Prof Adam Zeman (University of Exeter), and A/Prof Marc Sollberger (University of Basel).

Congratulations!

Awards: Muireann Irish was awarded the Paul Bourke Award for Early Career Research from the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia, and the NSW Premier’s Prize for Science and Engineering Early Career Researcher of the Year award. Fiona Kumfor received the UNSW Arc Postgraduate Council Award for Excellence in Postgraduate Supervision.

Congratulations to Sicong Tu, Rebekah Ahmed and Emma Devenney, who all successfully completed their PhD studies.

Funding: Muireann Irish was awarded an ARC Future Fellowship to continue her research into memory dysfunction in dementia. Fiona Kumfor and Muireann Irish were also awarded an NHMRC research grant to investigate apathy in dementia and potential targets for treatment. Rebekah and Sicong were awarded a highly competitive NHMRC early-career postdoctoral fellowship, which will allow Rebekah to continue her work on metabolism in frontotemporal dementia and will take Sicong to Oxford for 2 years.

Thank You!

Prof John Hodges, Prof Olivier Piguet, and the FRONTIER team would like to thank all the participants and their families for their continuing support in our research programme this year. Your generous time commitment and help with our projects is an integral part to our ongoing success.

In 2017, we look forward to welcoming you in our new premises at the Brain and Mind Centre of the University of Sydney.
Siddharth Ramanan is investigating how the parietal lobe contributes to nonverbal processes underlying social cognition in frontotemporal dementia. This research will clarify some of the difficulties decoding facial emotions correctly. This is progressing in scanning technique. Unfortunately, the results were inconclusive and no benefits were seen in the frontotemporal dementia, in which we participated, was released this year.

Our research findings have been presented at many scientific conferences, including the European Congress of Neuropsychopharmacology Conference (Vienna, Austria). Our research findings have also been presented at many scientific conferences, including the International Conference on Memory in Budapest, the 6th International Conference on Neuroplasticity of Brain, and the International Conference on Neuroplasticity of Brain. We have published over 30 peer-reviewed articles in international scientific journals, including in PLOS Biology on the role of the parietal lobe in social cognition in frontotemporal dementia.

Muireann Irish is progressing in research on how information about the self, and other social information, interacts with how much and how well we learn and remember. Her research explores memory dysfunction in frontotemporal dementia and in Alzheimer’s disease and in other neurodegenerative diseases. She is continuing to identify the brain regions that enable us to remember important events from our past and to imagine possible events that might occur in the future.

Sherry Chen is investigating cerebellar atrophy in frontotemporal dementia. Her work has been establishing new measures of social cognition. In collaboration with Macquarie University and the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, she has been using a new brain imaging technique, magnetoencephalography (MEG), to measure how the brain responds to social and non-social information. Fiona has also been involved in developing a new social cognition test, the TASIT, and support day for families and carers was held in June this year. Over 70 people attended the day, from people travelling from across the country.

Research presentations and publications

Conference Presentations and Publications

Information regarding the 2017 FTD Information Day, our scientific conferences, and our research findings have been presented at many scientific conferences, including the International Conference on Frontotemporal Dementias in Munich, Germany, and the International Conference on Frontotemporal Dementias in London, England. The European Congress of Neuropsychopharmacology Conference (Vienna, Austria) was very prolific in 2016. Muireann has been establishing new measures of social cognition. In collaboration with Macquarie University and the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, she has been using a new brain imaging technique, magnetoencephalography (MEG), to measure how the brain responds to social and non-social information. Fiona has also been involved in developing a new social cognition test, the TASIT, and support day for families and carers was held in June this year. Over 70 people attended the day, from people travelling from across the country.

Other Activities

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The outcome of the International Phase II trials, trial for behavioral-variant FTD, was released this year. The next phase, Phase III, will start in 2017. The trial will aim to improve diagnosis of frontotemporal dementias. He is now continuing his research on how information about the self, and other social information, interacts with how much and how well we learn and remember. Her research explores memory dysfunction in frontotemporal dementia and in Alzheimer’s disease and in other neurodegenerative diseases. She is continuing to identify the brain regions that enable us to remember important events from our past and to imagine possible events that might occur in the future.

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