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Australia announces over $79 M investment towards clinical trials and cohort studies

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To address important gaps in knowledge, with potential for significant health benefits



Administered through the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) Clinical Trials and Cohort Studies grant scheme in Australia, 22 teams will be supported to discover relevant and implementable findings for the benefit of human health, including improvements to healthcare practice and policy.

Over $3 million will be awarded to Associate Professor Alexander Van Akkooi who is aiming to provide a less invasive treatment option for patients with stage III melanoma without compromising outcomes.

Based out of the Melanoma Institute Australia (MIA), Associate Professor van Akkooi and a team of researchers at MIA, including 2024 Joint Australian of the Year Professor Georgina Long, will lead a clinical trial to demonstrate that smaller surgery for stage III melanoma leads to relapse free survival, while reducing complications, costs and improving quality of life.

Other projects receiving funding include:

- University of Sydney researcher Professor Kirstin Morley who will lead the first human trial of cannabidiol for the management of treatment resistant alcohol use disorder, generating high level clinical evidence for a safe new treatment for a common life threatening problem.

- A trial led by Professor Brett Manley from the University of Melbourne who is investigating the best dosage of caffeine treatment for very preterm babies, of which previous research revealed is one of the best medications to help with breathing and benefits that persist into later childhood.

Professor Steve Wesselingh, CEO, NHMRC said, "Well designed clinical trials and cohort studies have a critical role in providing scientific evidence for the translation of quality research into more effective practice, products and services. These projects will fill in information gaps to help us build a stronger bridge between evidence and its implementation in Australia's

healthcare system.”