

25 September 2015

## **CAN DEMENTIA BE PREVENTED?**

**Wicking Trust Public Lecture, Wednesday 14 October**

With people living longer there has been a massive increase in the number of people with dementia which is now being thought of as the end stage of brain failure. But can we prevent dementia by reducing the risk of brain failure?

According to Professor Craig Ritchie from the Psychiatry of Ageing at the University of Edinburgh, the answer is a resounding yes but we need to make our brains healthier in mid-life to reduce the probability of getting dementia.

Prof Ritchie said: "Brain failure is no different in some ways to other health conditions like cardiac failure. Both are often processes taking place over decades before symptoms develop. In cardiac disease we try to reduce the build up of waxy plaque in coronary arteries decades before you might get your heart attack through improved diet, not smoking and weight control. Some people may need drugs or surgery – but all in an attempt to reduce the risk of for example a heart attack".

Prof Ritchie, who will visit Australia to deliver the Wicking Trust Public Lecture on October 14, is leading the A\$100m *European Prevention of Alzheimer's Dementia* (EPAD) Project in Europe. The Public Lecture follows a Symposium during the day with participants including representatives of leading research bodies, policy think tanks, care providers, consumers and carers.

His hope, while in Australia, is to share information about the project and hopefully enlist support and involvement in the EPAD project from scientists here.

"Dementia is a global disease that deserves a global approach. Japan and America are looking to run similar programs to EPAD and I'd welcome involvement from Australia too," he said.

The goal of EPAD is to prevent dementia in people with evidence of the disease but who still may have little or no complaints or clinical symptoms.

According to Prof Ritchie, scientists are closer to a dementia breakthrough than ever before.

"There will be a series of little and medium sized breakthroughs - not a big one - the brain is too complicated for a big breakthrough - but I imagine we will wake up in 10 years and be doing things very differently at a personal, public health and clinical level to prevent dementia," Prof Ritchie said.

# Equity Trustees Media Release



The inaugural Wicking Trust Public Lecture will see Professor Ritchie discuss how the Government, public health organisations, clinicians, the commercial sector (including pharmaceutical, leisure and food organisations) and ultimately the individual, all have a part to play in this ongoing conversation and where we go to from here.

## **Event details**

Date: Wednesday 14 October  
Time: 6pm – 8pm  
Venue: Park Hyatt Melbourne  
Booking: This event is free, but places are strictly limited and registration is essential.  
[Register here.](#)

The J.O. & J.R. Wicking Trust (The Wicking Trust) was established under the terms of the Will of the late John Oswald Wicking, following his death on 11 June 2002. It is now one of Australia's most significant charitable trusts distributing around \$4 million annually.

Through its major grants program the Trust aims to achieve systemic change in the areas of ageing and Alzheimer's disease. The Wicking Trust is proud to also enjoy well-established partnerships with Vision Australia and the O'Brien Foundation (formerly the Microsurgery Foundation).

*\*The JO & JR Wicking Trust is managed by Equity Trustees and is proud to present the Wicking Public Lecture, which focus on exploring the impacts and research into Alzheimer's disease and the Wicking Symposium (by invitation only).*

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