

Funding from the Alzheimer’s Society to further research into the causes of sporadic Alzheimer’s disease

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According to [Alzheimer’s Disease International](#), many factors have been linked to the development of dementia. While some risk factors, such as age or family history, can’t be modified, other risk factors, such as exercise, smoking, alcohol consumption and obesity, can be altered. Those modifiable risk factors are of particular interest to University of Lethbridge neuroscientist Dr. Rob McDonald. He recently received funding from the Alzheimer Society of Alberta and Northwest Territories to further his research into the causes of sporadic Alzheimer’s disease (SAD).

World Alzheimer’s Month is September, a month intended to raise awareness and challenge the stigma around Alzheimer’s disease and all types of dementia. The grant is part of the society’s Hope for Tomorrow Research Competition, with \$1 million in funding distributed to five Alzheimer’s and dementia research projects in Alberta through a partnership between the Society and Campus Alberta Neuroscience.



“I’m grateful to the Alzheimer’s Society for this funding, which will help expand the research we’re doing to discover the factors that cause the disease,” says McDonald, who works out of the Canadian Centre for Behavioural Neuroscience. “This work will help lay a foundation for further research to pinpoint the best treatments for the various subtypes of SAD we are hypothesizing.”

“We are excited to congratulate the Alberta-based researchers awarded over \$1 million to help the ever-growing number of people affected by dementia,” said Dr. George Andrews, CEO of the Alzheimer Society of Alberta and Northwest Territories. “By funding these researchers, we continue to meet our \$5-million commitment to vigorous, peer-reviewed research that provides help for today and hope for tomorrow. Thanks to the generosity of funders and individual donors, the innovations happening right here in our region can make a major impact on the advancement of dementia research worldwide.”

McDonald's research focuses on late-onset or sporadic Alzheimer's disease, the most common type of the disease. SAD is more difficult to research because of the presumed interactions between genetics and lifestyle factors, which can vary from person to person.

The research team is working with a model where mice have been specifically bred with gene polymorphisms, which are alterations in specific DNA sequences.

The researchers will assess brain and body changes in the mutant mice models in combination with different lifestyle factors. In the second part of the project, they'll test the effect of exercise and cognitive training on the mutant mice.

This news release can be found online at funding for [sporadic Alzheimer's disease](#).

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Our University's Blackfoot name is Iniskim, meaning Sacred Buffalo Stone. The University is located in traditional Blackfoot Confederacy territory. We honour the Blackfoot people and their traditional ways of knowing in caring for this land, as well as all Indigenous Peoples who have helped shape and continue to strengthen our University community.