Research Impact Report 2024

At Ataxia UK, our mission is to find treatments and cures for ataxia, and to support everyone affected by ataxia until a cure is found. The research we fund through generous donations from Friends has a real impact on the world of ataxia research, and our understanding of all ataxias. This report summarises the impact of 51 Ataxia UK-funded research projects, awarded between 2014 and 2024.

More ataxia research

Over £10m raised in further funding, and 42 research collaborations

Every £1 Ataxia UK spent on research projects raised nearly £7 in further funding, specifically to be used for ataxia research. Collaborations with companies and universities increase research into the ataxias.

New ataxia knowledge

83 journal articles, 40 research tools and 10 databases

Journal articles, research tools, and databases increase our understanding of the ataxias and potential treatments. Sharing new knowledge with the ataxia community accelerates research into the ataxias.

Raising awareness

93 engagement activities

Engagement activities raise awareness of ataxia and research, reaching international audiences including healthcare providers, students, and the general public.

Supporting researchers

32 awards and recognitions

This demonstrates the quality of the researchers supported by Ataxia UK. Awarding and recognising researchers celebrates the impact of ataxia research funding on both the research field and the ataxia community.

Case study: The many ways an FA research project can have an impact

In 2022, Ataxia UK awarded Dr. Sara Anjomani Virmouni at Brunel University a research grant of £26,471 for the project 'Investigating the role of bioactive sphingolipids in Friedreich's ataxia (FA)'. This research into small molecules called sphingolipids will improve our understanding of the disease pathophysiological mechanisms and provide a unique opportunity to devise novel therapeutic strategies for FA.

Dr. Anjomani-Virmouni has impacted the ataxia community in many ways. She has presented research findings at several scientific meetings/conferences, including the 2023 EFACTS meeting, the 2023 Mitochondrial dysfunction and neurodegeneration conference, and the 2023 Rare Diseases Network seminar series. Dr. Anjomani-Virmouni has been invited to join the editorial board for many journals (e.g., Frontiers in Neuroscience and Frontiers in Neurology). She has secured £700,000 in further funding from the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council and the Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance. **(for every £1 invested by Ataxia UK, Dr Virmouni has secured £26 for future research**).

Case study: The impact of a project on SCA6 and mitochondrial disease

In 2022, Ataxia UK awarded Dr. Ng and his team at Newcastle University £4,928, which provided co-funding along with the Academy of Medical Sciences for a project called 'Balance and Gait abnormalities in adult patients with mitochondrial disease and spinocerebellar ataxia type 6'. Following this Dr. Ng and his colleague Dr. Lisa Alcock as well as collaborators from Tübingen, Germany secured a grant of ~£48,000 in 2023. This enabled a study over 12 months looking at laboratory and real-world assessments of balance and gait in individuals with FA. The team were also awarded over £370,000 from the POLG Foundation in 2023. The funding is for a multi-centre project called the 'Coalition for Trial-Readiness in POLG'. This is to investigate the appropriateness and scalability of emerging outcome measures for POLG-related mitochondrial disease and ataxia and potential barriers to their adoption.

Dr. Ng has also presented at various conferences including at the European Academy of Neurology Congress 2024 and ICAR 2024. Ataxia UK has recently awarded funding of £4,998 for Dr. Ng and his team's project 'A feasibility study of Remote Patient-Reported Outcome measures in Mitochondrial Disease and Spinocerebellar ataxias (R-PROMS)'. The project is a collaboration with Monash University, Australia, who led a study called SCA-remote. This new study includes patients with all ranges of disease severity.

The information in this report is based on researcher-reported outcomes, collected via ResearchFish. Grants awarded via the CureDRPLA programme are not included in the data. researchfish® is a registered trademark of ResearchFish Limited.
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