30 November – 2 December 2011
Sydney
Australia

First announcement
Call for papers

Host: MND Australia

Organised by the MND Association in co-operation with the International Alliance of ALS/MND Associations
In the last few years our knowledge about ALS/MND has rapidly expanded with help from new high throughput technologies and the human genome map. After more than 100 years of very little progress, great advances in our understanding of the disease are now occurring.

Clues to the underlying disease mechanisms have been found in important rare ALS/MND families with multiple affected members. We have now identified several key pathogenic molecules and most recent evidence suggests that many more genes can cause ALS, indicating that the disease may have many different origins. From this work it is clear that ALS/MND can no longer be thought of as a single disease entity. This begins to explain the great variation in the duration and severity of the disease in different individuals.

Some of these ALS genes make proteins that accumulate in the dying motor neurons in the brain and spinal cord including in the common sporadic, non-hereditary, form of ALS. This raises the exciting possibility of exploring the precise mechanisms causing sporadic ALS. Studies using antibodies to these proteins show that the disease process is not restricted to motor neurons but involves other neuronal and glial cell populations. This may explain how the disease appears clinically to spread in a patient from an initial body region of onset. Defects in some of the newly discovered ALS genes also cause cognitive changes and fronto-temporal dementia (FTD) implicating an ALS-FTD spectrum of disease.

New electrophysiological methods show that the disease can start abruptly, as if triggered. We now know that the damaging effects of these gene variations is influenced by cellular stresses and presumably both the disease onset and severity may be influenced by environmental stresses.

All this new knowledge raises the possibility of targeting therapies at particular molecules to prevent the disease in individuals with confirmed genetic risk and raises hope that therapies can be found to ameliorate or stop disease progression in sporadic cases. The ALS/MND Symposium to be held in Sydney, November 2011, will bring researchers together to explore the latest findings and progress being made in ALS/MND research in 2011.

Proposed platform session themes include:

- Genetics/genomics
- Translational research strategies
- Cell stress mechanisms
- Stem cell technologies
- Disease models
- Lessons from other motor neuron disorders
- RNA and protein processing
- Contribution of non-neuronal cells to pathogenesis and spread.
Clinical meeting

Chair: Matthew Kiernan, University of New South Wales

Recent years have witnessed a surge of interest across the ALS/MND landscape around the world. The discovery of causal genes linked to the development of familial ALS/MND and advances in our understanding of disease pathogenesis more generally, have re-ignited research interest. Problems related to clinical heterogeneity have also been identified – not all ALS/MND is equal. It has become clear that patient survival is determined by many factors, including the clinical phenotype, rate of disease progression and the specialised management of respiratory failure and nutritional status.

Further improvement in survival seems dependent on advancing our understanding of the origins and spread of ALS/MND. Development of early and specific diagnostic methods remains a critical need, as does the discovery of therapies that not only slow the progression of the disease, but also address the secondary consequences of respiratory failure and malnutrition. The development of novel biomarkers to objectively assess disease progression will greatly enhance and refine clinical treatment trials and significantly reduce trial costs. In addition, the power of population registries are now being increasingly recognised. As inevitably occurs with greater research focus, the potentials for new therapies and approaches are now being realised.

The increasing potential to slow disease progression and enhance life expectancy through multidisciplinary care, necessitates the need to continue to review and refine management strategies, improving the evidence base and disseminating best practice more effectively.

In keeping with these recent international developments, the Clinical Meeting of the Sydney Symposium will cover the breadth of what is new in ALS/MND, from diagnostic biomarkers to current treatment trials, from cognitive issues and clinical phenotypes through to neuro-imaging and most importantly, patient care.

Proposed platform session themes include:

- Heterogeneity of ALS/MND
- Respiratory and nutritional management
- Cognitive change
- Translating evidence into practice
- Holistic care
- Surrogate markers
- Clinical trials and trial design
- Epidemiology.
Call for abstracts

Sydney, Australia 30 November – 2 December 2011

Conditions for acceptance

- All abstracts must be submitted online, via a link on the MND Association’s website www.mndassociation.org/symposium. Abstracts submitted via fax or email cannot be accepted.

- Abstracts must be in English, font size 11 and not more than 450 words in length.

- Abstracts must be presented using the following format: Background, Objectives, Methods, Results, Discussion and Conclusions. A maximum of three keywords for each abstract should be provided. ‘ALS’ and ‘MND’ should not be used as keywords.

- Authors must stipulate the preferred presentation format (15-minute Oral Communication, Poster Presentation or Work In Progress Poster Presentation).

- Authors may submit abstracts outlining ongoing work but they must be submitted as ‘Work in Progress’. Unless so submitted, abstracts may be rejected if they do not contain sufficient data and conclusions.

- Case studies will be treated as ‘Work in Progress’ unless, in the opinion of the Programme Committee, they add significant new knowledge to the field.

- Abstracts will be published in a supplement to the journal Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis and will be available on the MND Association’s website. Abstracts accepted as ‘Work in Progress’ will not be published in the journal, but will be published on the website.

- All the information for the abstract must be submitted using the online submission system. Text can be directly typed into an online form or copied and pasted from Microsoft Word.

- Authors must provide telephone, fax and email contact details, to which all Symposium correspondence will be sent.

- Full instructions and Conditions of Acceptance are available on the website www.mndassociation.org/symposium.

- Any queries regarding the submission of abstracts should be sent to abstracts@mndassociation.org.

- Formal acceptance of an abstract and reservation of a poster board, if appropriate, is conditional upon payment of the registration fee.

Deadline for abstract submission is Monday 2 May 2011
Sydney is a cosmopolitan, vibrant and multicultural city, made up of a series of precincts each with its own unique character and appeal to both national and international visitors.

Sydney boasts some of the world’s best beaches, beautiful weather, incredible shopping, exciting entertainment, a range of dining experiences from around the world, and lively nightlife!

Built around the attractions of a working harbour, Sydney is the thriving capital of New South Wales. Sydney is the largest and most dynamic economy in the country, providing just the right combination of business and pleasure.

The Sydney Opera House is Australia’s pre-eminent cultural centre. Famous for its cutting-edge architecture, the building’s series of white-tiled sails jut into the harbour at Bennelong Point, perched on a platform of pink granite. The iconic structure was designed by Danish architect Jorn Utzon, and was recently declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
Visit the world famous Bondi Beach, with a curving stretch of pale gold sand and turquoise waves, attracting surfer dudes and beach lovers alike. It’s one of Sydney’s favorite hot spots for catching the sun and people watching!

For a trip away from the hustle and bustle of the city, enjoy the Blue Mountains, a World Heritage listed area boasting one million hectares of forests, sandstone cliffs, caverns, canyons, waterfalls and bushland.

North of Sydney, enjoy the Hunter Valley, one of Australia’s oldest wine regions with more than 80 wineries, exploring the rolling hills and vineyards by bicycle, horse-drawn carriage or balloon!

Sydney is easily accessible with 44 passenger airlines flying into Sydney International Airport. Only 8km from the city centre.

Sydney information:

www.australia.com
www.sydney.com.au
www.visitnsw.com/sydney.aspx
www.visitnsw.com/sydney.aspx
**General information**

**Organiser:** Motor Neurone Disease Association  
**Host:** MND Australia

**Venue:** Sydney Hilton, 488 George Street, Sydney, NSW 2000, Australia  
Tel: + 61 (0) 2 9266 2000  Fax: + 61 (0) 2 9265 6065

Sydney city centre is only 8km from the airport. Delegates can take a direct rail link from the airport to the centre in 13 minutes or, alternatively, taxis are always available. All private interstate and regional bus travellers will arrive at Sydney Coach Terminal. Sydney’s main rail station is Central Station.

Further information on accommodation will be published on our website in mid February. Visit [www.mndassociation.org/symposium](http://www.mndassociation.org/symposium)

Full details will also be included in the full printed Symposium Programme available in August.

*The Symposium proceedings will be in English.*

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Please return to:

**Conference Team**  
MND Association UK  
PO Box 246  
NORTHAMPTON  
NN1 2PR  
UK
Online registration is available immediately at www.mndassociation.org/symposium. The full printed Symposium Programme and Registration will be available in August.

Fees:
- Early Bird Registration (until 15 July): £350.00
- Standard Registration (16 July – 14 October): £410.00
- Late Registration (15 October – 11 November): £470.00

The registration fee is payable in £ Sterling.

Information request

☐ Please send me a Symposium Programme and Registration when available.

Title: First name: Last name: 
(Prof/Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms)

Department:

Job title:

Organisation/Company:

City: State/County:

Zip/Post Code: Country:

Tel No: Fax:

Email:

Data Protection

The MND Association complies with the Data Protection Act. Your details will be added to our database. You may inform us at any time if you do not wish to receive mailings from the MND Association or the organisations with whom we co-operate.

Please return to: Conference Team, MND Association UK, PO Box 246, Northampton NN1 2PR, UK Fax: (-) 44 (0) 1604 611858 Email: symposium@mndassociation.org

Information is also available at www.mndassociation.org/symposium