

Parkinson's UK and Rosetrees Trust Joint Senior Research Fellowship **Information for applicants**

'Novel cell culture platforms driving drug discovery'

Since their development, cell culture techniques have contributed to our understanding of disease processes and have played a vital role in drug discovery. However, in the past, traditional cell culture techniques have had some limitations, since they used cell types which didn't fully replicate the pathological processes of Parkinson's and 2 dimensional (2D) culture systems do not replicate the brain's cellular architecture.

Recently, there have been a number of technological advances which have revolutionised cell culture systems. These include the development of patient derived cells, such as iPSC's, which more closely mimic the underlying pathological process of Parkinson's and the development of 3D culture systems which better represent the brain cellular architecture and physiological function. Such platforms have the potential to accelerate drug discovery in Parkinson's, for which there is currently no cure.

Parkinson's UK and Rosetrees Trust are keen to support the development of novel neuroprotective treatments for Parkinson's by helping high calibre researchers establish independent careers through their fellowship programmes. This joint fellowship programme, aims to attract early career researchers with an excellent track record in novel cell culture techniques, looking to establish a highly innovative independent drug discovery programme and become research leaders of the future.

"Our goal with this fellowship is to accelerate the development of novel drug therapies which slow or halt the progression of Parkinson's". *David Dexter (Associate Research Director, Parkinson's UK) and Vineeth Rajkumar (The Rosetrees Trust).*

What we are looking for

Applicants should be early-career stage researchers with up to 5 years postdoctoral experience (excluding career breaks).

We welcome applications from all sections of the community, irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

Purpose and scope

- Applicants should be prepared to establish their own Parkinson's drug discovery research group that utilises the latest state-of-the-art cell culture techniques.
- The duration of a fellowship is for three years and a maximum of £300,000.
- Parkinson's UK and Rosetrees Trust will each fund 50% of the fellowship up to a maximum of £150,000 over 3 years.
- Funding is available to cover the cost of the applicant's salary and appropriate start-up and running costs. It may also provide support for additional research assistance, for example, a technician or research assistant.
- Extensions of up to two years to an awarded fellowship will be considered by the charities but may be dependent upon the host institution committing funds towards the fellow's salary.
- Grants are tenable at a UK university, NHS trust or other research institution.
- Applicants should have a MD or PhD and will usually be expected to have a maximum of 5 years postdoctoral experience at the time of the application.
- Sponsors (supervisors) supporting the fellowship application should hold employment or honorary (if a clinical academic) contracts with the host institution that extend beyond the period of the grant.
- Co-supervisors and collaborators may be based at institutions outside the UK and / or at pharmaceutical or biotech companies.
- Applicants should read Research grant terms and conditions before completing the application.

Application procedure

- Applications must be submitted before 4pm on 19 January 2022. Interviews for shortlisted applications are likely to be held in April 2022.
- All applications must be made in English.
- Fellowship applications will be made through the Parkinson's UK [online grant application system](#).
- Applicants are not required to submit a hard copy application.
- In order to avoid formatting problems, text from other documents should be pasted into Notepad (or similar programme) before being copied into the application form.
- Details of any collaboration should be included and a letter confirming agreement from each collaborator should be submitted as an appendix.

- Any relevant 'in press' articles should be attached as appendices.
- Applicants will receive confirmation from the Parkinson's UK online applications system once an application is submitted. Unless the charity requires further information, no correspondence will be entered into until the results are notified.
- Applicants are requested not to initiate contact with the Research team during the review process.

Costing the application

- Please refer to the Parkinson's UK '[Costs guidance for research grants](#)' before completing your application.
- Applicants must justify the funds requested.
- Applicants must apply for funding in British pounds sterling.
- Applicants should seek the advice of their institution's Finance or Research Office on costing the application well in advance of the application deadline. Online submissions of the application are sent directly to Parkinson's UK.
- Applicants are encouraged to seek internal Institutional peer review prior to submitting their application.
- In line with the Association of Medical Research Charities guidelines, charities will only reimburse direct research costs for awarded grants as per the application submitted. The charity will not fund directly allocated or indirect costs:
- Allowable costs
 - Directly incurred costs are costs that would only be incurred if the project were to go ahead. They include salaries for staff dedicated to the project, consumables, animals, equipment, open access publishing etc.
- Non-allowable costs
 - Directly allocated costs are costs of resources used by a project that are shared by other activities and based on estimates (eg principal and co-applicant costs, estates costs).
 - Indirect costs are non-specific costs charged by host institutions across all projects that are based on estimates (eg HR and finance services, library costs).
- Staff costs: Basic salary should be stated for each individual. Provision for London weighting, superannuation and National Insurance should be shown separately in the space provided. An appropriate grading and salary must be quoted even where a named assistant cannot be specified; both grading and salary should have the approval of the appropriate administrative officer of the institution where the assistant would be employed.

- Research expenses: Details must be given. Up to £1000 per year may be requested for travel to conferences. Grants do not cover administrative expenses.
- **Open Access Publications:** Costs related to open access publishing may be included. Please see our guidance on [open access publishing](#). The costs requested must be fully justified. Biological materials (such as human tissue or cell lines): Please specify.
- Equipment: Please specify each piece of equipment requested.
- Inflationary rate: Inflation will not be paid in year one; inflation in years two and three is allowable up to 3%.

Review procedure

- Applications will be sent out to review by at least three independent experts, selected from the Parkinson's UK College of Experts and Rosetrees Trust scientific panel and up to four lay grant reviewers (people affected by Parkinson's). Reviewers score applications on a scale from zero to ten.
- Applications will be shortlisted based on the combined average scores of the external peer and lay grant reviewers.
- Shortlisted applicants will be invited to interview. The interview panel will be made up of members of external peer reviewers, additional invited experts in the field and lay people from the Research Support Network.
- In advance of the interview, candidates will be forwarded anonymised comments from external peer and lay reviewers. Candidates should be prepared to address concerns raised by the reviewers.
- The interview panel's recommendations for funding will be submitted to the Parkinson's UK and Rosetrees Trust Executive for approval.
- A good Plain English Summary is essential for evaluation by lay grant reviewers
- Applications will be judged by scientific reviewers and panel members against the following criteria:
 - quality of the researcher and his or her ability to make an impact on Parkinson's research
 - potential impact of the research for people affected by Parkinson's
 - scientific quality and novelty of the research proposal
 - quality of the research environment and the level of support provided by the host institution.
 - value for money
 - budget and infrastructure

- the importance of the research for people affected by Parkinson's
- the potential benefit of the research for people affected by Parkinson's

Unsuccessful applications

- Edited comments from the scientific and lay grant reviewers and panel members will be made available to unsuccessful applicants.
- No further discussion with Parkinson's UK and Rosetrees Trust staff or with members of the panel is allowed.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

We welcome applications from people from all sections of the community, irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief. Please explain how you have considered these issues when creating a diverse research team. Parkinson's affects all sections of the community, irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief. If you are involving human participants, please address how these factors will be considered in your experimental plan.

We understand that different people choose different career paths, so we want to provide flexible research career opportunities. If you're funded by us, you can request flexible and part-time working. We always try to accommodate requests, as long as they fit in with the needs of employing organisations.

If you have further questions about making an application, please contact:

Parkinson's UK Research team.

Email: researchapplications@parkinsons.org.uk

Visit: <http://www.parkinsons.org.uk/researchgrants>

Rosetrees Trust Research Team

Email: vrajkumar@rosetreestrust.co.uk

Visit: <https://rosetreestrust.co.uk>