

Media Release

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Viertel Charitable Foundation awards Senior Medical Research Fellowships

The Trustees of the Sylvia and Charles Viertel Charitable Foundation today announced two recipients of the Viertel Senior Medical Research Fellowship for 2009, one of the most prestigious awards for young biomedical researchers in Australia.

The recipients are Dr Benjamin Kile from The Walter & Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research, whose research is titled "The molecular regulation of platelet production and function"; and Dr Brendan Jenkins from Monash University, whose research is titled "Genetic dissection of cytokine signalling in inflammation and cancer".

As recipients of the Viertel Medical Research Fellowship, Dr Kile and Dr Jenkins join a distinguished group of scientists who have received these awards. The Fellowships have played an important role in fostering the development of some of Australia's most accomplished young biomedical and clinical scientists by providing \$195,000 per year over a five year period, to allow them to pursue their research.

Professor Peter Leedman, Chairman of the Viertel Medical Advisory Board said: "In his role as a Viertel Senior Research Fellow, Dr Kile will undertake a program of studies into the regulation of platelet production and function. Having already made key discoveries about the control of platelet lifespan, Dr Kile's team will endeavour to develop new ways to prolong platelet lifespan. The results from this work will have broad application to disorders of bleeding, transplantation medicine, leukaemia, heart disease and stroke.

"Dr Jenkins has made important contributions to the field of inflammation and cancer," Professor Leedman said. "As a Viertel Senior Research Fellow he will lead a team investigating how the inflammatory signalling pathways, specifically the STAT proteins, promote development of gastric cancer. The work has application to multiple other cancers as well (including prostate and colon), and may form the basis for the development of new therapeutic strategies in these diseases."

In addition to the Fellowships, the Trustees have also awarded five Clinical Investigator-ships consisting of one-off grants of \$60,000 designed to assist clinicians to establish research programs within the clinical setting

The Sylvia and Charles Viertel Charitable Foundation is one of the largest charitable foundations in Australia. Mr George Curphey, Justice Debra Mullins, Mr Rex Freudenberg and ANZ Trustees are the trustees of the Foundation.

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