

LINK TO JD RF

opens new doors

The recently established Diabetes Ireland Research Alliance means that international diabetes research will not pass Ireland by, writes **Sheila O’Kelly**

The Diabetes Ireland Research Alliance has entered into an agreement with the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF) to encourage high quality type 1 diabetes research in Ireland and to support the global work of the JDRF.

The Diabetes Ireland Research Alliance is a subsidiary charity of the Diabetes Federation of Ireland which was set up recently.

The alliance primarily funds high-quality diabetes research projects in Ireland and raises the necessary funds to support these projects. Together with the JDRF the Federation aims to:

- Encourage high-quality type 1 diabetes research in Ireland
- Promote Ireland as a JDRF base for international lead research into finding a cure for diabetes
- Support the JDRF’s D-GAP (see below) research project
- Raise the profile of both organisations in the Republic of Ireland
- Build a sustainable relationship with Irish-based scientists and researchers
- Raise funds for type 1 diabetes research in Ireland and the UK.

Key activities for 2010

- There will be three type 1 research focused meetings in early 2010 – one in Dublin, one in Cork and one in Galway
- There will be a seminar for Irish researchers to inform them about JDRF (international) global grant structures and how to access them
- The Federation and the JDRF will carry out joint marketing to raise the profile of both groups and of the partnership
- The Federation and the JDRF will undertake a joint fundraising initiative, including promotion of the existing programmes of each group in Ireland with the aim to raise €50,000 in 2010
- The Federation and the JDRF will develop relationships with all stakeholders with an interest in promoting diabetes research.

What is D-GAP?

As part of the Federation’s commitment to supporting research into type 1 diabetes it will support the JDRF’s research project Diabetes-Genes Autoimmunity and Prevention (D-GAP).

Research funded by JDRF has already shown that the genetic profile of an individual determines whether or not they run the risk of developing type 1 diabetes. It also reveals that the genes identified operate within the immune system.

These findings link closely to other research showing that people with, or at risk of developing type 1 diabetes, have alterations in the way that the immune system interacts with insulin producing cells.

This makes it highly likely that type 1

diabetes results from a failure at numerous levels of the ability to fine tune certain aspects of the immune response.

The next stage in type 1 diabetes research is to make the link between the genes and the immune alterations, and that is what it is believed D-GAP will be able to do.

This exciting piece of research brings together researchers from Cambridge, Bristol and London who aim to understand how and why type 1 diabetes occurs by unravelling the connection between genes, the immune response and type 1 diabetes.

If a link can be established, it will greatly improve the understanding of how type 1 diabetes develops and pave the way for developments in treatments and therapies.

Meanwhile, the Federation in conjunction with the Health Research Board is funding two type 2 diabetes research projects at a combined cost of €430,000.

One is the research being carried out by Dr Sean Dineen in the West – the Galway Diabetic Foot Study; and the other is the research into type 2 diabetes and bariatric surgery, by Dr Donal O’Shea, which has just finished its field work.

To make a direct contribution to any of these research projects, simply ring 1850 909 909 or send a donation by post to Dr Anna Clarke, Diabetes Ireland Research Alliance, 76 Lower Gardiner St, Dublin 1.

If you would like to organise a fundraising event for type 1 or type 2 diabetes research, we would be delighted to hear from you.