



Winter Newsletter 2021

Welcome to our Winter newsletter! We're excited to bring you a round-up of what has been going on at the Euan MacDonald Centre over the last year. We are a network of approximately 250 scientists, doctors and health professionals across Scotland so there's always lots going on.

Despite the challenges of Covid-19, 2021 has been another year of useful research findings both in the labs and in the clinic. We aim to find out more about the biology of MND and how it affects people, so that we can work towards finding new therapies and improving quality of life.

Our flagship UK-wide clinical trial, MND-SMART, has grown in less than two years from enrolling its first participant in Edinburgh to now having recruited over 250 people with MND at 15 sites across Scotland and England. More people are now able to participate in a clinical trial if they wish to.

Once again we are incredibly grateful to our supporters, donors and fundraisers, without whom our research would not be possible.

We would like to wish you all a happy and peaceful festive season from all of us at the Euan MacDonald Centre.

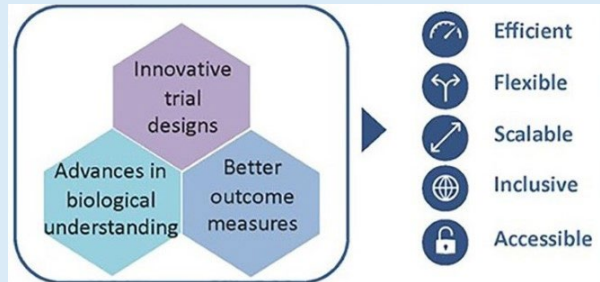
Clinical trials news



MND-SMART: latest facts and figures

Our clinical trial of drug treatments in MND has now recruited over 250 people and there are 15 sites recruiting participants across Scotland and England.

[Update on the trial](#)

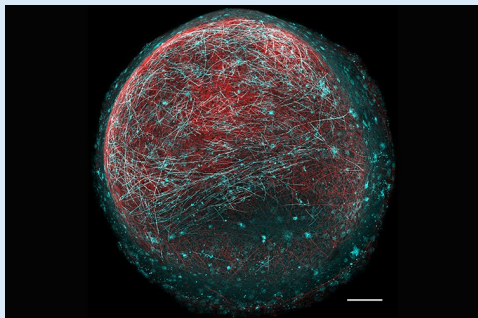


What should MND clinical trials look like?

A review of over ten years of clinical trials in MND has informed what trials should look like in the future to maximise the chances of success.

[Read about our findings](#)

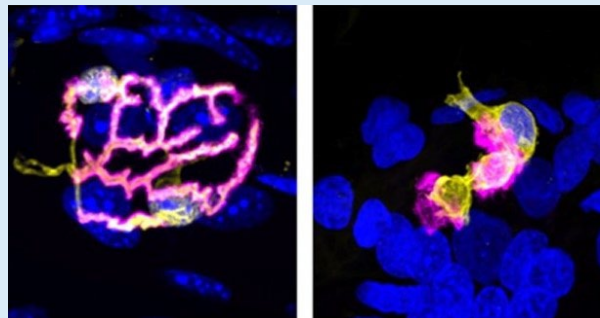
An update from the labs



Mini 3-D brain models from stem cells

In a technological step-forward, our scientists showed that they could use human stem cells to make millimetre-wide 'brain models' that mimic vital aspects of the human nervous system.

[Find out more about the research](#)



Insights into nerve-muscle connections

A team from the Euan MacDonald Centre published research findings revealing insights into how human nerves and muscles interact at sites known as neuromuscular junctions (NMJs).

[Find out more about the research](#)

Fantastic fundraisers!

To everyone who has fundraised – and everyone who has supported a fundraising challenge or activity – we give our sincere thanks. Together, in 2021, you have raised an incredible £50,000 in aid of our research.



[Read our 2021 fundraising round-up](#)

Like to help fund MND research in 2022?
[Visit our website's Support Us pages](#) for ideas about how to get involved.

A promotional poster for the MND²⁴ fundraising challenge. The poster is set against a background of various sports equipment like a basketball, tennis rackets, a baseball bat, boxing gloves, and a bicycle helmet. The text on the poster includes: 'MND²⁴ 3 - 6 March 2022', '24 hours dedicated to MND research', 'EUAN MACDONALD CENTRE Vital research into motor neuron disease', 'THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH', and the website 'https://edin.ac/MND24'. At the bottom, the phrase 'What will you do?' is written in a large, red, cursive font.

Will you join the MND²⁴ fundraising challenge?

MND²⁴ is a global initiative raising awareness and funds for motor neuron disease research. Founded in 2020 by Sandy Stirling, MND²⁴ asks you to take part in any sport or activity for 24 hours between Thursday 3rd and Sunday 6th March 2022. We would love you to join in, either as an individual or as a team.

[Find out how we can support your challenge](#)

Poetry and Hope for MND

Created for the Edinburgh Festival Fringe this Summer, this unique online event was an exciting collaboration of music, poetry, and science that celebrates creativity, hope, and life. It brought together people living with MND, researchers working to find new treatments, and talented poets and musicians. If you missed the premiere, the video is still freely available to watch, below and [on YouTube](#).

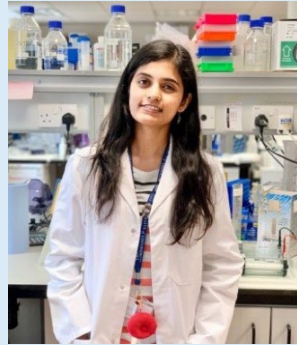


Member news



Three-minute thesis success

Congratulations to Euan MacDonald Centre PhD student Anna Sanchez Avila, who won the University of Dundee 'Three Minute Thesis' competition, and progressed to the semi-finals of the UK-wide competition.



Hampton Award winners

We were delighted to recognise Nithya Nair and Tanya Van Der Westhuizen for their commitment to go above and beyond in their MND research.

[Read about the awards](#)

[Watch the video](#)



Neuromuscular Junction Research Conference

Congratulations to a team of early-career researchers who organised a successful online conference, bringing together early-career scientists around the world who work on the neuromuscular junction.

[Find out more](#)

www.euanmacdonaldcentre.org



The Euan MacDonald Centre for Motor Neuron Disease Research

is based at the University of Edinburgh and is a not-for-profit, charitable network of over 200 researchers across Scotland.

We use research to improve the lives of people living with motor neuron disease (MND) and related conditions.

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