

A brainy idea 25 years in the making

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A discovery made 25 years ago about how the brain controls blood pressure regulation is only now being explored with the help of scientists from the Howard Florey Institute.

Eminent German scientist, Prof Wilfrid Jänig, is in Melbourne this month to collaborate with Florey scientists, Dr Robin McAllen and Dr Bradford Bratton, on his research involving a pathway in the brain that controls blood pressure and may worsen cardiovascular disease.

When Prof Jänig first discovered this new concept of looking at blood pressure regulation, other scientists could not get their head around his idea.

“It had nothing to do with the technology available at the time as it would have been possible to develop the technology for this research,” Prof Jänig said.

Dr McAllen, who has previously worked with Prof Jänig on other brain research, further explains why it took 25 years for the idea to evolve and be explored.

“Prof Jänig was 25 years ahead of his time. It is not uncommon for scientists to detect something in their research that the scientific community is not ready to accept,” Dr McAllen said.

Prof Jänig’s collaboration with the Florey may have important consequences as sympathetic nerves are known to be overactive in

cardiovascular diseases such as hypertension and heart failure, and this worsens the disease. Their research is trying to find a way to block this overactivity without blocking normal activity.

Source: Research Australia

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