



Media Release

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SCIENTIFIC ADVANCES AND INCREASED INVESTMENT OFFER NEW HOPE FOR TREATMENT OF BRAIN DISEASE

Increased investment in research into diseases of the brain is giving scientists and clinicians the potential to develop treatments that will reduce the impairment suffered by those afflicted by diseases such as Alzheimer's, stroke and cerebral palsy says a Report published by The Academy of Medical Sciences this morning.

In the Report, *'Restoring Neurological Function'*, the Academy sees the opportunity to move from current treatments that are primarily aimed at helping patients to adapt to brain impairment to a new era which focuses on helping the brain to achieve a measure of functional recovery.

The chair of the Academy's Working Group, Professor Richard Frackowiak of University College London said: 'A new science of restorative neurology is within our grasp. On the basis of current research we can now begin to raise the expectations of patients and practitioners and challenge the long-held assumption that damage to the central nervous system is irreversible.'

The Academy's President, Professor Sir Keith Peters of Cambridge University welcomed the announcement earlier this month by Health Secretary John Reid of increases in research funding targeted at illnesses in older people, including brain disease.

Sir Keith said 'Following the launch of the Academy's Report *'Strengthening Clinical Research'* in the autumn we have seen medical research move up the Government's agenda. Our latest Report will provide a road map for how part of the new money promised in the Budget should be invested to achieve maximum benefit for patients.'

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The Report draws attention to new treatments under development such as transcranial magnetic stimulation, neural transplantation and gene therapy. It also highlights the progress made in imaging the brain, in the growing understanding of the relationship between the brain and behaviour, and the increasing appreciation of environmental factors in regeneration after brain injury.

To ensure research progress benefits patients as quickly as possible, the Report argues that scientists and doctors should work together much more closely, and calls for the establishment of regional Neurorehabilitation Research Centres. It goes on to argue for improved career structures and incentives to attract the best minds to this area of medical research.

Copies of the report '*Restoring Neurological Function: putting the neurosciences to work in neurorehabilitation*' are available from the Academy of Medical Sciences 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH, tel.: 020 7969 5289 or on the Academy website:

www.acmedsci.ac.uk

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Notes for editors:

1. The independent Academy of Medical Sciences promotes advances in medical science and campaigns for these to be translated as rapidly as possible into benefits for patients. The Academy's 750 Fellows are leading medical scientists from hospitals, academia, industry and public service.
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3. Copies of the Academy's '*Strengthening Clinical Research*' report are available from from the Academy of Medical Sciences 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH, tel.: 020 7969 5289 or on the Academy website: www.acmedsci.ac.uk