

Milestones

The Australian government will dedicate AU\$30 million to the creation of a dementia research facility at the **University of New South Wales**, in Sydney. John Hodges, currently at the University of Cambridge (Cambridge, UK), will take up an appointment as professor of Cognitive Neurology at the centre.

P David Adelson, director of the **Pediatric Neurotrama Center** at the Childrens' Hospital of Pittsburgh (Pittsburgh, PA, USA), will lead a multicentre trial to study the effectiveness of hypothermia therapy to treat paediatric brain injury, funded with US\$11.5 million from the NIH.

The Muslim Aid International and the Pakistan Myasthenic Welfare Organisation launched the first **mobile unit for the treatment of neurological diseases** in Lahore. They aim to provide mobile treatment units in several cities across the country.

The philanthropist Alfred Taubman donated US\$5 million to support research led by Eva Feldman, director of the **ALS clinic at the University of Michigan** (Ann Arbor, MI, USA), done in collaboration with Martin Marsala (University of California, San Diego, CA, USA).

The Burroughs Wellcome Fund announced the 2007 Career Awards for Medical Scientists in US academic centres. The 20 recipient physicians include neuroscience researchers **Robert Baloh**, **Clark C Chen**, **Mahalia S Desruisseaux**, **Michael Z Lin**, **Eric M Morrow**, and **Mark N Wu**.

Richard Gemeinhart, of the University of Illinois (Chicago, IL, USA), received a grant of US\$1.7 million over 5 years to develop brain-released chemotherapy to treat glioblastoma. **Thomas A Christensen**, at the University of Arizona (Tucson, AZ, USA), received a grant of US\$1 million to map the respective brain networks linked to language, attention, and memory with MRI. **Mani S Mahadevan** (University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, USA) received the first Rachel Fund Award for Myotonic Dystrophy.

Alastair Compston, professor of Neurology at the University of Cambridge (Cambridge, UK) won the 2007 Charcot Award for his research on multiple sclerosis. **Huda A Zoghbi**, professor of Neurology at the Baylor College of Medicine (Houston, TX, USA), received a Pasarow Award for her research into spinocerebellar ataxias. **Samir Haj-Dahmane** at the University of Buffalo (Buffalo, NY, USA) received a grant of US\$1.7 million over 5 years, to investigate the role of endocannabinoids in stress-related behaviour.

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Lifeline

John Krakauer obtained his Bachelor of Arts in Natural Sciences from Cambridge University, UK, and his medical degree from Columbia University, NY, USA. After his medical internship at Johns Hopkins University, he returned to Columbia for a neurology residency and fellowships in motor physiology and stroke. He is now co-director of the Motor Performance Laboratory at Columbia, where his work focuses on experimental and computational motor control, and functional imaging of motor learning and stroke recovery.



What do you think is the most over-hyped field of science and medicine at the moment?

Epidemiology and large clinical trials—lots of statistics, not much science.

What research paper had the most effect on your work and why?

The early PET studies on stroke recovery by Frackowiak and colleagues—they started the attack on a difficult and important problem in neurology.

Who is your favourite politician and why?

Corey Booker, Mayor of Newark, New Jersey—a strange politician who believes we have a duty to make people's lives better and has the courage to try.

If you had not entered your current profession, what would you have liked to do?

In order of decreasing plausibility: art historian, literary critic, tennis player, dancer for the Alvin Ailey Company.

What would be your advice to a newly qualified doctor?

Try hard to acquire the quantitative and critical skills that medical schools go out of their way not to teach you.

What is the best piece of advice you have received, and from whom?

Be driven by a question and not by a technique—Eric Kandel.

What is your greatest fear?

That I will run out of ideas.

What are you currently reading?

The Savage Detectives by Roberto Bolaño—an incomparable novel about search, travel, and memory of friends.

How would you improve the public's understanding of research?

Ban religion.

What keeps you awake at night?

Merengue—I live in a Dominican neighbourhood.

Do you believe in ghosts?

No, but I wish they existed so I could finish a few conversations with my father.

If you could have dinner with a famous person of your choice (dead or alive), who would it be?

Pedro Almodóvar. Or Joss Whedon, creator of "Buffy the Vampire Slayer".