

## **Bacterial and Respiratory Infectious Diseases Group (BRIDG)**

### **Community Involvement opportunity**

**Vacancy Title: Research Buddy and/or Reference Group member**

#### **About the position/s**

We are looking for up to 10 consumer/community members to join us in our work in the area of bacterial and respiratory infectious diseases. We are seeking people interested in being research buddies to work closely with researchers on specific programs. We are also looking for people who are interested in becoming a reference group member to help guide the whole team's work. People have the option to be both a research buddy and reference group member if they wish. Both positions will support our team of researchers to ensure that consumers/community have a strong voice in our work.

**BRIDG team vision: To reduce the global burden of childhood ear and lung disease through discovery, collaboration and translation.**

Respiratory infections are the leading cause of illness and death worldwide. Each year, pneumonia alone kills >4 million adults and 1 million children and ear infections (Otitis Media (OM) affects 709 million people each year and it has been estimated that 61% of 1–4-year old's, globally suffer from OM. The chronic and recurrent nature of middle ear infections is due to the presence of bacterial biofilm found in middle ears. This allows the bacteria to evade the child's immune response and resist antibiotics. While vaccines have been developed to protect against some respiratory pathogens, for others there are no preventative therapies.

#### **What am I expected to do?**

As a research buddy you will work closely with researchers on specific projects. To provide them with guidance, support and advice across the specific project. As a member of the reference group you will provide guidance and support on research grant applications and plain language summaries across the breadth of the team's work. Research buddies and reference groups provide a link between consumers, community and researchers across the BRIDG, providing input to develop strategies to inform the wider community about the research of the group and guidance and expertise on consumer and community issues and research priorities.

#### **What skills or experience do I need?**

We are looking for people with a lived experience of ear infections. This can be parents who have had children with recurrent ear infections/ grommet surgeries, your own experience with ear infections, or experience with a family member's ear infections.

#### **How long am I expected to be involved?**

Research buddies will be appointed for 1-2 years depending on the project.

Reference group members are appointed for 2 years. At the end of the initial term, you can apply for reappointment for a further term of 1- 2 years on the reference group.

### Where will meetings be held?

Research buddies will meet with the project teams regularly (ad-hoc, or monthly depending on your availabilities). The reference groups will meet 3-4 times per year. Initially, meetings will be held online, however there is the possibility that face-to-face meetings may also be included over the life of the reference group. Research buddies may meet face to face with teams. All face-to face meeting will only be considered when it is COVID safe.

### What support is offered?

An honorarium is offered per hour for meetings attended, whether in person or online. Training and support is offered by the Telethon Kids Institute through the project team and the Institute’s Consumer Involvement Coordinator.

### About the Programs (Plain Language Summary)

	Objective	Solution
	<b>Discover</b> the cause of ear infections	Determine current bacterial and viral causes of OM in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children
<p>We are determining the current microbiological cause of OM in WA Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children. This involves collaboration with clinicians (surgeons, anaesthetists, audiologists, paediatricians), Aboriginal research officers and our BRIDG team to recruit 400 children and collect their middle ear fluid over the next 2 years. Our team will use tools established at Telethon Kids to determine current OM microbiology. We will report the resulting data to vaccine manufacturers to guide development and inform licensure of suitable vaccines. Information generated will also empower the community with local knowledge on ear disease to advocate for change.</p>		
	<b>Prevent</b> ear (and lung) infections	Development of a novel intranasal therapy to prevent otitis media
<p>A therapy that could confer broad protection against both viral and bacterial respiratory infections would be extremely valuable for reducing the global respiratory disease burden. Our goal is to develop a safe, non-invasive, low-cost therapy for preventing respiratory infections in children and adults. We have developed a novel therapy that prevents respiratory infections (influenza and bacterial otitis media) in pre-clinical models. We now aim to conduct a first-in-human study to determine the safety and tolerability of this new therapy to inform future clinical trials in adults and children.</p>		
	<b>Cure</b> chronic ear infections	An ear treatment that dissolves the glue and kills the bacteria
<p>We are conducting a Phase II randomised controlled trial to assess the efficacy of multiple Dornase Alpha applications in preventing repeat grommet surgery. We are also reformulating this therapy for a single application at the time of first surgery. This involves the incorporation of the drug into a liquid antibiotic solution that forms a slow-release gel at body temperature. This reformulation aims to enhance pathogen clearance without the need for repeat parental application.</p>		