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WESTMEAD

Solving the brain puzzle

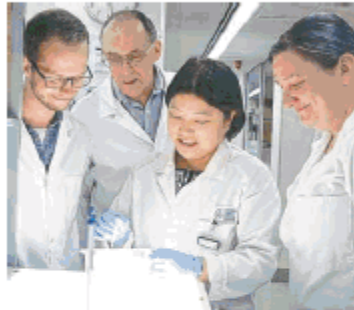
HER work is known as “basic research” — but it is far from basic.

Neuroscientist Annie Quan from Westmead’s Children’s Medical Research Institute studies what controls the signals in the brain.

“Understanding how the brain works is one of the most fascinating aspects of science,” Dr Quan said.

Her work in the cell signalling unit focuses on neurons, which are responsible for learning, memory and development; specifically the different types of proteins inside these neurons.

“I focus on studying the role of these proteins and the signalling in neurons and any abnormalities that control this process,” she said.



Dr Annie Quan and members of her research team.

Dr Quan is spreading the word about the importance of research during Brain Awareness Week.

“From our perspective, funding is what’s important to continue successful research,” Dr Quan said.

“We really need the public to be interested in neuroscience research and having

their support makes a real difference.

“People don’t necessarily understand that what we do at a cellular level, ultimately, could improve overall brain function.”

Dr Quan and her team are currently working on a project which aims to understand how brain cells communicate.

“With this understanding, we can learn how to fix it when things go wrong in diseases,” Dr Quan said.

“I want to know how do we lose our memory and the ability to learn, what goes wrong?”

“That is the biggest driver for me — it gets me excited. Every discovery helps us piece together the giant puzzle of finding a cure to a brain disease.”