Eyes on the prize – top international award for cataract researcher

A Wollongong researcher has been awarded the top research prize from the National Foundation for Eye Research in the US.

Professor Roger Truscott, from the Illawarra Health and Medical Research Institute, has been selected for the prestigious $15,000 Kinoshita award in recognition of his team’s work in showing that age-related cataract is due to the deterioration of proteins that make up the human lens.

Cataract is one of the leading causes of vision impairment in older Australians. Researchers do not yet know how to prevent cataract and surgery, which involves removing the cloudy lens and replacing it with an intraocular lens, is the only treatment. As surgery is not often readily available to older people in third world countries, the ultimate goal of NFER and cataract researchers is to develop a non-surgical treatment.

“Understanding the biochemical mechanisms responsible for cataract may allow us to intervene in this process” says Professor Truscott, who will travel to Kona, Hawaii, in January 2014 to deliver a Kinoshita Lecture.

In October 2013, Professor Truscott, together with ANU Professor, John Carver and Professor Andrew Abel from Adelaide University, was awarded a National Health and Medical Research Council Project Grant to conduct further research on understanding age-related protein aggregation, the mechanism of cataract and its prevention.

Ends

Professor Truscott is available for interview. P: (02) 4221 3503 or E: rjwt@uow.edu.au.

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About IHMRI

The Illawarra Health and Medical Research Institute (IHMRI) is a joint initiative of the University of Wollongong and Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District.

IHMRI’s goal is to foster, support and grow health and medical research in the Illawarra by connecting and supporting academic and clinician researchers around research problems of relevance to the region and the world. IHMRI provides research leadership, coordination, infrastructure and facilities to more than 500 academic and clinical researchers throughout the region.