



# Media Advisory

---

**For immediate release**

**Mar. 3, 2010**

## **AIF Funding to Brain Repair Centre Catapults Research from Lab to Patients**

Halifax's Brain Repair Centre (BRC) will use an award of almost \$2 million from the Atlantic Innovation Fund (AIF) to develop a "Cognitive Repair Kit" and other innovative technologies to treat common impairments of cognitive function (problems with attention, memory and thinking) resulting from brain injuries or diseases such as stroke and Parkinson's disease.

With the \$1.8 Million award the BRC, a multi-disciplinary collaboration of Dalhousie University, Capital Health, and the IWK Health Centre, will establish a Cognitive Repair Laboratory. One task of the lab will be to develop the "Cognitive Repair Kit," a computerized, game-like set of mental training exercises to treat common cognitive impairments, said principal investigator Dr. Gail Eskes.

"This AIF funding will allow us to address the critical need for the development of effective, evidence-based cognitive treatments to improve the lives of patients and families. Our goal is to develop accessible treatments that patients can use at home under therapeutic supervision," said Dr. Eskes, neuropsychologist and principal investigator for this project. "Funding for this project will help move Atlantic Canada to the forefront of innovative technological approaches to cognitive repair."

Neurological diseases or injuries are leading causes of death and disability in Canada. While medical advances have saved more lives, most patients are left with a disability that significantly impacts personal independence family resources and ultimately the social and economic health of Canada. Treatments for physical disabilities have received the majority of health care resources to date. However, there is growing recognition that cognitive impairments resulting from brain injury or disease are common. They are often unrecognized and become sources of chronic disability for individuals living in the community.

Dr. Eskes said we now know that the brain has a remarkable ability to create new connections when established ones are injured. The purpose of the Cognitive Repair Kit is to provide targeted, intensive training to enhance the growth of the right connections and thus significantly improve cognitive abilities that underlie all aspects of daily function.

"With this project the Brain Repair Centre moves into the clinical realm to develop tools for cognitive treatment in patients undergoing brain repair therapies," said Dr. Ivar Mendez, Chairman of the BRC. "The Brain Repair Centre has a track record of two previous AIF awards focused on basic science research in brain repair."

**Principal Investigator**

Dr. Gail Eskes PhD  
Departments of Psychiatry, Medicine & Psychology  
Member, Brain Repair Centre

**Co-Principal Investigator**

Dr. Ivar Mendez MD  
Professor & Head Division of Neurosurgery  
Chairman, Brain Repair Centre

**Co-Investigators:**

Dr. Ray Klein Ph.D.  
Department of Psychology  
Member, Brain Repair Centre

Dr. David Westwood, Ph.D.  
Division of Health & Human Performance  
Member, Brain Repair Centre

-30-

**Media Enquiries:****Joann Tusia, Brain Repair Centre**

[joann.tusia@dal.ca](mailto:joann.tusia@dal.ca)

(902)-473-7293w

(902)-456-3420c

**Allison Gerrard, Dalhousie Medical School**

[allison.gerrard@dal.ca](mailto:allison.gerrard@dal.ca)

(902)-4941789w

(902)-222-1917c

**Capital Health. Marketing & Communications. Pager: (902) 458-5376**

*Capital Health* comprises: the Capital District Mental Health Program; Centre for Clinical Research; Cobequid Community Health Centre; Community Health; Dartmouth General Hospital; Addiction Prevention and Treatment Services; East Coast Forensic Hospital; Hants Community Hospital; Eastern Shore Memorial Hospital; Musquodoboit Valley Memorial Hospital; The Nova Scotia Hospital; Musquodoboit Valley Memorial Hospital; Public Health Services; Twin Oaks Memorial Hospital; Nova Scotia Environmental Health Centre; and the QEII Health Sciences Centre.

The Capital Health District also encompasses seven volunteer **Community Health Boards** that advise Capital Health through the development of community health plans and encourage public participation in health planning. For more information, visit the Capital Health website: [www.cdha.nshealth.ca](http://www.cdha.nshealth.ca).

[facebook.com/CapitalHealth](https://www.facebook.com/CapitalHealth)

[twitter.com/Capital\\_Health](https://twitter.com/Capital_Health)

## *Healthy People, Healthy Communities*

The Brain Repair Centre is a multidisciplinary collaboration linking more than 100 world-class researchers and physicians specializing in groundbreaking treatments and technologies in the field of brain repair. They range from surgeons who replace tissue in the human brain to recover lost capability, to scientists in the field of imaging, stem cell neurobiology, pharmacology, psychiatry, ophthalmology, neurology, psychology, kinesiology and cognitive neuroscience.