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Huntington Society of Canada funds breakthrough research to benefit many movement disorder diseases

(Kitchener, ON) January 17, 2014 – The [Huntington Society of Canada](#) (HSC) funding supports promising new research for Huntington disease (HD) conducted by Dr. Stephen Ferguson, Canada Research Chair in Molecular Neurobiology.

The Huntington Society of Canada is proud to fund research with such great potential. Dr. Ferguson, a scientist at [Robarts Research Institute](#) at [Western University](#) in London, Ontario, working with a former colleague in Brazil, made this promising discovery with a mouse model. They removed the glutamate receptors, mGluR5, from the cells that sense chemical change. This resulted in improvements in motor behaviour in the mouse, showing promise for HD patients.

“Glutamate receptors are a significant area of pharmaceutical research and this work has a logical next step to test compounds that target mGluR5,” says Bev Heim-Myers, CEO and Executive Director of HSC. “Where a mouse model is very different than a human brain, in principle it could lead to treatments for humans in the future. What is also notable is that there could be application of this discovery to other movement disorders such as Parkinson's disease.”

Huntington disease (HD) is an inherited, debilitating brain disorder that is fatal and incurable. About one in every 7,000 Canadians has HD and approximately one in every 5,500 is at-risk of developing the disease. Many more are touched by HD whether as a caregiver, a family member, or a friend. Huntington disease is devastating for both the body and the mind. The symptoms, which may include uncontrollable jerking movements and relentless cognitive and emotional impairment, usually present between the ages of 30 and 45, and gradually worsen over the 10-25 year course of the disease. Eventually they lead to total incapacitation and death.

This research has potential to benefit other movement disorder disease. Bev Heim-Myers explains, “We know that when looking for answers to Huntington disease there are overlapping pathologies to other neurological diseases and likely, the answers we find for Huntington disease will lead to better understanding of treatments for Parkinson's and other diseases such as ALS and Alzheimer's.”

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The Huntington Society of Canada is a respected leader in the worldwide effort to end Huntington disease (HD). HSC is the only national health charity dedicated to providing help and hope for families dealing with Huntington disease across Canada. The Huntington Society of Canada aspires to a world free from Huntington disease.

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