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News Release

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PSP Association Research Fellow wins prestigious international research award

Dr Luke Massey, The PSP Association's Research Fellow, based at The Sara Koe PSP Research Centre in London has won The International *Movement* Disorder Society's 2008 Junior Award for excellence in clinical research.

Dr Massey will now travel to Chicago to receive this prestigious award and present his research to some 3500 leading scientists and clinicians from all over the world at the 11th International Congress of Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorders on Wednesday 25th June.

PSP (Progressive Supranuclear Palsy) is a fatal brain disease that gradually robs people of their ability to walk, talk, eat, drink and see. Patients become trapped inside their own bodies unable to communicate yet remain mentally alert. Death occurs on average within five to seven years of onset of the disease, the last few years of which are spent in a wheelchair or bed-bound. The cause of PSP is unknown and there is no effective treatment to slow or halt its progression.

Diagnosis is based on the patient's symptoms with MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scans used to exclude other diseases. Lack of a diagnostic test for PSP results in frequent misdiagnosis with symptoms, particularly in the early stages, often thought to be those of Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, a stroke or dementia. Records held by The PSP Association indicate that some 3 out of every 4 cases of PSP are misdiagnosed leading to inappropriate treatments which can exacerbate problems.

Dr Massey's work focusing on the potential use of high powered MRI (9.4 Tesla) to detect changes in the brains of people with PSP offers hope for better and earlier diagnosis of PSP. An area of the brain called the subthalamic nucleus (STN) deteriorates and shrivels in PSP but this region of the brain cannot be seen clearly on scans using conventional MRI (1.5 Tesla). Using high powered MRI (9.4 Tesla) Dr Massey has been able to define the boundaries of the STN in post mortem brain. Work is continuing to detect other key areas of change in the PSP brain.

Dr Luke Massey said, "I am absolutely delighted to have won the International Movement Disorder Society's Junior Award for excellence in clinical research. The research is very much a team effort and in accepting this prestigious award I do so on behalf of the whole team working on this project. It is a great honor to be invited to Chicago to present my research to the world's leading experts in movement disorders. "

Professor Andrew Lees, Director of the Sara Koe PSP Research Centre said:

"This is the most prestigious award in the world for young clinical researchers in the field of Movement Disorders. Dr Massey was competing against stiff competition from North America and the rest of Europe and it is particularly gratifying that research into the orphan disease PSP should be recognised by the International Movement Disorders Society."

Dr Angela Wilson, The PSP Association's Director of Research said:

"We are absolutely delighted that Dr Luke Massey has been awarded the International *Movement Disorder Society's* 2008 Junior Award for excellence in clinical research. The PSP Association is a small charity with very limited funds for research so to have one of our Research Fellows compete and win on an international basis is truly fantastic."

- Ends -

For more information please call Dr Angela Wilson on 0774 979 5172.

For general information about PSP and The PSP Association please call 01327 322410 or visit www.pspeur.org.

Notes to Editors

- PSP is thought to affect some 10,000 people in the UK but the actual number is likely to be much higher as it is often misdiagnosed and goes undiagnosed in the elderly.
- The PSP Association was established as a registered charity by Brigadier Michael Koe, OBE and his wife Sara in 1994, shortly before she died from PSP in 1995. They were appalled to learn that so little was known about this disease and established the charity to "conquer PSP through effective research, education, welfare and communication".
- Since The PSP Association was established in 1994 it has:
 - developed a unique UK-wide Nurse Specialist Service to support PSP patients and their carers.
 - helped over 2,000 families with members suffering from PSP
 - invested more than £2m into research into PSP.
 - established the Sara Koe PSP Research Centre, the first PSP research centre in the world, based at the Institute of Neurology, 1 Wakefield Street, London.
- The number of cases of PSP is set to rise significantly with the changing demographics and an ageing population.
- PSP claimed the life of *Daily Mail* columnist Nigel Dempster in 2007, and Dudley Moore died from the disease in 2002.
- J.N.P. Watson, author and former polo correspondent for The Times, died from PSP in February 2008.

Working for a world free of PSP

The PSP Association. Registered charity 1037087

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