

## Media Release

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### Top award for MIMR Professor

Professor Gail Risbridger, Director of MIMR's Centre for Urological Research and Associate Dean of Research at Monash University, has received one of the world's top endocrinology awards.

Professor Risbridger was awarded the Asia and Oceania Medal from the British Endocrinology Society on 6 November, in recognition for her contribution to endocrinology, especially her research into the effects of hormones on the prostate gland.

"To be recognised by my peers in this way is a highlight of my career," said Professor Risbridger. "Research into prostate disease is at an exciting crossroads. While we have known for more than 50 years that prostate disease is controlled by hormones, we have only recently discovered new ways that hormones can be used for treating both benign prostate disease and prostate cancer."

Professor Risbridger is internationally recognised for her contribution to understanding the effect the hormone estrogen has on the development of tumors in the prostate. "Estrogen, which is widely known as the 'female' hormone, also plays a vital role in male development," she said. "Estrogen is critical to cellular growth and differentiation in the prostate. A strong focus of my team's research is to explore how estrogen could be used to treat prostate disease and play a role in the development of new estrogen-based therapies."

Professor Risbridger gained her PhD at Monash University and was a founding member of MIMR (formerly Monash Institute of Reproduction and Development). She is an NHMRC Research Fellow and a Fulbright Scholar.

In February 2006, Professor Risbridger received international recognition for creating human prostate tissue from embryonic stem cells, creating the ideal research model on which to test her hormone-related research.

"It's a very exciting time to be working in prostate research, but as always, new discoveries throw up new challenges; challenges I'm looking forward to continuing to face for the next decade and beyond," said Professor Risbridger.

Benign prostate disease (BPH) affects 90% of men aged over 80. Although not life threatening, BPH can be extremely debilitating as the need to pass urine can be urgent and frequent. Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men. 11,000 new cases are diagnosed and 2500 men die from prostate cancer in Australia each year.

#### More information:

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