

Australian Schizophrenia Research Bank

This important project is nationwide and has been established to create a 'bank' of information that researchers will access for use in genetic research. The management of the ASRB is composed of eminent scientists and doctors, in each state.

The ASRB initially aims to recruit 4,000 participants (2,000 people with the illness and 2,000 unaffected controls of a comparable age and gender profile) over 4 years. Data will also be collected from multiplex families where more than one member is affected by schizophrenia.

The data being collected will be blood samples, MRI scans and information from an interview and neuropsychological evaluation. Complete confidentiality can be assured for any participant, and there is reimbursement to cover out of pocket expenses incurred.

There has been a successful multi media campaign which has now finished airing across Australia, and as of December more than 2,600 people have contacted the ASRB. The Clinical Assessment Officers based in each state are currently working through these numbers.

Only Australian researchers will have access to the data bank for the first 12 months, international researchers will then be able to apply. It is very exciting to think that in the near future we may have some answers to this illness.

A great deal of professional expertise and attention to detail of every aspect of this project has been exercised by those involved in its establishment.

Information about the ASRB is provided on the SRI/ASRB website and there is a toll-free telephone number to call (1800 639 295) if you are interested in being a research volunteer or to ask questions.