

autistica

Science in the Service of Autism

City Brokers raise funds for Autistica

Families affected by autism are being offered new hope – thanks to the generosity of staff at one of the City's biggest firms of wholesale brokers.

Money raised during the annual Charity Day at ICAP (December 8) will go towards a pioneering project to develop a new therapy to ameliorate the symptoms of autism in the very young. The baffling neurological condition is reckoned to affect up to one in a hundred people.

The project known as iBasis (Intervention – British Autism Study of Infant Siblings) is due to be launched in the New Year at Manchester University. It will aim to develop a preventative treatment for small babies known to be at risk of autism because an older sibling has already been diagnosed with the condition.

Scientists led by Professor Jonathan Green believe an intensive programme of 'social enrichment' could allow very young children in the early stages of autism to develop a better ability to relate and respond to other people. The absence of this social awareness is one of the classic symptoms of autism and one of its most distressing features. The research will involve the intensive training of the parents of the young subjects taking part in the experiment to provide them with the techniques to help their children.

The research is being backed by Autistica, the only charity which raises money for research into the biological causes and treatment of autism. The initial funding has been provided by Kirby Laing Foundation.

Autistica is one of 200 charities globally which will benefit from the ICAP Charity Day. The event is a unique philanthropic initiative. Quite simply all the profits from trading on that day are handed over to good causes. Each of the company's divisions around the world selects which charities will benefit.

Professor Jonathan Green, who is directing the iBASIS study said: 'Our study is an internationally innovative collaboration between basic neuroscience and clinical intervention, which aims to make important advances in our work with early developing autism. New developments like this just couldn't take place without the support and commitment from charitable funding and we are very grateful for the generosity and hard work that makes this possible.'

Michael Spencer, Group Chief Executive Officer, ICAP said: "Our vision for ICAP's Charity Day is that we give something meaningful back to the global community we live and work in. Charity Day for us is a collaborative effort – it is a day when our staff, customers, suppliers and beneficiaries, all pull together to give 100%. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all involved in ICAP's Charity Day for their continued support and wish them every success with raising money for our charities this year.'

Christine Swabey, Chief Executive of Autistica said: 'This ground-breaking research is entirely dependent on charitable funding and we are enormously grateful to the Kirby Laing Foundation and to ICAP for providing the funds to support Professor Green and his team. Thanks also to Autism Speaks Inc for the final funding for this project. If successful it could lead to larger studies which we hope will advance our understanding of the possibilities of early intervention.'

For further information, please contact:

Paul Burden, Director of Communications, Autistica Tel: 07768 011333
Alexandra Uempleby, ICAP Media Relations Tel: +44 (0) 20 7050 7104