

At Ataxia UK, our mission is to find a cure for ataxia, and to support everyone affected by ataxia until a cure is found. The research we fund through generous donations from Friends has a real impact on the world of ataxia research, and our understanding of all ataxias. This report summarises the impact of 51 Ataxia UK-funded research projects, awarded between 2013 and 2023.



## More ataxia research

**Almost £6m raised in further funding, and 57 research collaborations**

Every £1 Ataxia UK spent on research projects raised over £5 in further funding, specifically to be used for ataxia research. Collaborations with companies and universities increase research into the ataxias.



## Raising awareness

**80 engagement activities**

Engagement activities raise awareness of ataxia and research, reaching international audiences including healthcare providers, students, and the general public.



## New ataxia knowledge

**83 journal articles, 43 research tools and 25 databases**

Journal articles, research tools, and databases increase our understanding of the ataxias and potential treatments. Sharing new knowledge with the scientific community accelerates research into the ataxias.



## Supporting researchers

**26 awards and recognitions**

This demonstrates the quality of the researchers supported by Ataxia UK. Supporting researchers encourages them to stay in the ataxia research field.



## Case Study: The many ways an FA research project can have impact

In 2018, Dr Natalia Gromak was awarded an Ataxia UK grant for her research on the role of unusual structures, called R-loops, in cells of people with Friedreich's ataxia (FA). Even though the genetic cause of FA was identified in 1996, we still do not fully understand how it causes FA, representing a major challenge in the development of therapies. Dr Gromak's project aimed to bridge this knowledge gap by studying the role of R-loops in FA. During this research project, the researchers showed that R-loops form around the mutation which causes FA, and that they contribute to the development of symptoms of FA. These discoveries suggest that R-loops could be targeted by treatment, which could lead to new treatment approaches for FA. This project was funded by a £35,000 grant from Ataxia UK, alongside a grant from the Rosetrees foundation. Since 2018, Dr Gromak has had an impact on the research community in many ways. She has published two articles in scientific journals on the topics of R-loops and FA, and has given 14 presentations to a variety of audiences. She has also been awarded £2,189,000 in further funding for ataxia research from the MRC and EPA fund (University of Oxford) (for every £1 invested by Ataxia UK, Dr Gromak has secured £62.50 for future research).

## Case Study: Early impact of a SCA3 research project



In 2022, Dr Sandra Macedo-Ribeiro was awarded an Ataxia UK grant to study a new treatment approach for SCA3. In this project, the researchers are studying whether nanobodies could be used to treat SCA3. Nanobodies are small parts of antibodies – a component of our immune system – that can be made in the lab. In the short time since this grant was awarded, Dr Macedo-Ribeiro and her team have taken part in two engagement activities, including presenting their work at an international conference, and participation in Rare Disease Day, in which Dr Macedo-Ribeiro presented her research in a video which was available to the public. Engagement activities such as this raise awareness of ataxia and research. We look forward to hearing more about the impact of this project in the future.