Research Impact Report 2026

At Ataxia UK, our mission is to find treatments for the ataxias, and to support everyone affected by ataxia until treatments are 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. Thank you to each and every person who has donated to support research into the ataxias. This report summarises the impact of 62 Ataxia UK-funded research projects, awarded between 2016 and 2026.

More ataxia research

Over £8m raised in further funding, and 99 research collaborations across 17 countries

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.

New ataxia knowledge

72 journal articles, 41 research tools and 6 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.

Raising awareness

90 engagement activities

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

Supporting researchers

62 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: Making an impact by improving understanding of ataxias

In 2023 Ataxia UK awarded £29,981 to Dr Roderick Maas at Radboud University Medical Center in the Netherlands for a co-funded project with the National Ataxia Foundation. The ongoing project aims to use nerve and muscle ultrasound to study peripheral nervous system degeneration in Spinocerebellar Ataxia Type 3 (SCA3). Dr Maas and his team went on to receive further funding from the Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance (FARA) and Stichting Friedreich Ataxie Nederland (Stichting-FAN) in 2024 for a second project using different imaging techniques to better understand and monitor the neuropathy in Friedreich's ataxia (FA). Dr Maas and his team have published a number of scientific articles on their work in ataxias, including the first papers related to the project co-funded by Ataxia UK, and have presented their work at conferences including the International Congress for Ataxia Research (ICAR) 2024.

Case study: Making an impact through physiotherapy for ataxias

Dr Lisa Bunn is a specialist ataxia physiotherapist and associate professor of neurorehabilitation at the University of Plymouth. Lisa has provided physiotherapy services for adults at the London Ataxia Centre, and has recently been part of the paediatric and transitional clinics. Our funding has supported her PhD and ongoing work to develop evidence-based rehabilitation for people with ataxia. She has contributed to Ataxia UK's Medical Guidelines, and the NICE guideline for Rehabilitation of Chronic Neurological Conditions. She has recently been appointed to the NIHR Senior Research Leader Programme. This prestigious national award will provide protected time for her to work with others to lead and grow research, including in her own specialist area of research that aims to improves outcomes for people living with ataxia.

Dr Bunn says, *"I am incredibly grateful to Ataxia UK for backing my work over many years. [Ataxia UK's] support has been instrumental not only in enabling my PhD back in 2006, but in helping to build a wider programme of research and support opportunities for others entering the field (like 2 of my PhD students who have focused on rehab and management of ataxia)."* In 2025, Ataxia UK awarded funding to Dr Bunn to test the feasibility of the Exopulse Mollii suit in people with ataxias, a wearable device that uses gentle electrical stimulation to target balance, coordination of movement and reduce fatigue. If feasible, a larger trial will be pursued to test whether or not the suit is effective for people with ataxia.