



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

News Release

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£2.2m boost for pioneering research into mental health conditions

Novel research aimed at better understanding mental health conditions such as depression is to receive a £2.2 million investment.

The initiative heralds a step-change in the approach to understanding mental health and could pave the way for new treatment, researchers say.

It is based on big data – an emerging area of research that draws meaningful insights from vast amounts of information.

Scientists will pool data from several sources including anonymised health records, genetics and psychological studies to build a picture of the development of disease.

The funding – a combination of a prestigious Medical Research Council Data Pathfinder Award and backing from the University of Edinburgh – will also be used to create secure facilities for health data research, which will form a vital resource for Scottish researchers.

Experts say the project builds on Scotland’s expertise in health data science and ties in with the city of Edinburgh’s ambition to become the data capital of Europe.

One in four people in the UK will experience a mental health issue in a given year.

Andrew McIntosh, Professor of Biological Psychiatry at the University of Edinburgh, who leads the project, said: “Our vision is to make meaningful links between ongoing research studies spanning the whole lifespan and anonymised health records to better understand the causes and consequences of mental health conditions. We hope that this will enable more effective treatments and ultimately pave the way for improving resilience to common mental health disorders.”

“This combination of resources means Edinburgh is poised to make significant advances in mental health research based upon rapidly developing resources for data science that are unparalleled in the UK.”

For further information, please contact:

Kate McAllister, Press and PR Office, Tel 0131 650 6357, Email Kate.McAllister@ed.ac.uk

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