



The Freemasons' Fund for Surgical Research



About the Freemasons' Fund for Surgical Research

Since 1967 the Freemasons' Fund for Surgical Research (FFSR) has provided Research Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons (RCSE) with grants each year to pursue cutting-edge research work, which might otherwise not have been funded. During its over 50 years of history, the FFSR has supported much ground-breaking research and many of the Fellows have gone on to distinguished careers.

Many of the Fellowships have been in the field of cancer research but many other disciplines have been supported as well, from organ transplantation and robotic surgery to laparoscopic techniques and joint replacements. Such innovations in surgery continue to push the frontiers of patient care and procedures that would have once been futuristic and unachievable are now changing the lives of patients thanks to research and technological progress enabled by major grants from the FFSR.

The Trustees meet regularly to select new Fellows and review past outcomes, guided by their surgically qualified members and assisted by senior members of the RCSE (including the President). Notably, in 2020 a device developed by Meera Joshi, a Fellow who received her grant in 2018, was used by hospitals to assist in the fight against Covid. It is a sensor which can easily be attached to patients. It operates wirelessly, and vital signs can be monitored in real time. At a time when staffing in hospitals which has been so stretched it has been a vital aid in over-stretched hospitals.

Making a difference

The work of recent Research Fellows in the last 2 years includes –

- Tackling deep infection following knee joint replacement surgery
- Improving the testing of prostate cancer biopsies
- Stem cell construction of cartilage for ear reconstruction
- Improving outcomes for sufferers of advanced bowel cancer
- Tackling bowel disease in premature babies
- Identifying women with greater risk of breast cancer

And in the current year Fellows are working on –

- Investigating biomarkers in pancreatic cancers
- Improving understanding of the implications of frailty in emergency surgery
- Examining prospects for liquid biopsies when treating thyroid cancer
- Understanding the development of gastric cancers

100%

of the fund has been donated by Freemasons

Over £1 million

was donated in 1967 when the appeal was first launched

In 2014 Royal Arch Companions donated **£2.4 million** to mark their Bi-centenary

Since 1967 about **£5.9 million** has been donated to the RCSE

The current value of the fund is about **£7 million**

In recent years the average annual donation to RCSE has been **£240,000**

Just in the last 10 years, some **40 Fellows** had been supported in their research

In 2022/23 a further **5 Fellows** are being supported

Our history

The Freemasons' Fund for Surgical Research (FFSR) began life in 1967 following an appeal by the then Grand Master, the Earl of Scarborough, when he launched an appeal to raise funds for a new Masonic charity to mark the 250th Anniversary of the foundation of Grand Lodge.

The donations made by FFSR in the first 47 years were thanks to the original donations by Freemasons in 1967. The capital was astutely invested under the watchful eyes of the FFSR Trustees over the years, eminent Freemasons, selected to champion and steer

the investments to produce returns sufficient to sustain the annual grant donations whilst maintaining the capital value of the fund in face of inflation.

It was not until 2014 that FFSR received further contributions when the Royal Arch Companions

donated an incredible £2,424,900 in recognition of the bicentenary of the establishment of the Royal Arch. The Fund has never been part of the Festival system and has relied on the careful investment of its two major donations, supported by occasional gifts from Individual Lodges and Freemasons.

The object of the fund has always been and remains to support the charitable work of the Royal College of Surgeons of England (RCSE) in the field of clinical research

The Fund is controlled by Trustees, appointed by the Grand Master, and advised by independent external investment advisors and accountants. There are no employed staff, all the work is undertaken voluntarily by the Trustees and the two Secretaries to the Trustees.



RCSE Presentations to Lodges and Chapters

In normal years teams from RCSE visit around 30 Lodges and Chapters throughout the country to give presentations on the research work of Freemasons Fellows upon receiving invitations from Lodges, but the pandemic derailed the plans for 2020 and 2021. In 2019 two Fellows gave an impressive presentation on their work to UGLE. We are pleased to announce that these promotional visits have resumed.



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Relief Chest Number: E3000



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