British Society for Research on Ageing

IMPACT REPORT 2024



Leading Science for Lifelong Health





BSRA

REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1174127

Impact Report 2024

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WELCOME

from David Weinkove
BSRA Chair



I'm really proud of the progress the BSRA has made in 2024. At a time when academic institutions are under significant financial pressure, the BSRA's role supporting and funding research on ageing is more important than ever. Ageing is the greatest single risk factor for disease, so developments in ageing research are critical to understanding not only how to age well, but also to preventing disease and helping us lead healthier, longer lives.

Our members and donors are integral to this work, and we are immensely grateful to them for their ongoing support. We would also be unable to achieve anything without the enthusiasm and commitment of our volunteer Board of Trustees. In 2024 we worked together to clarify our vision, and in the pages that follow we set out the five elements of this vision, and the progress that has been made in each area.

2025 is proving to be a year of growth and momentum for the BSRA. We are delighted to have appointed a Chief Executive in October 2024, Sally Bird, to lead the Society in an exciting new chapter for the organisation. She has already made a huge impact, and I look forward to working with her, our Trustees, our members and our partners, to create a world where people can age in good health and enjoy the benefits of disease-free years in retirement.



CHAIR OF BSRA TRUSTEES

INTRODUCTIONS



Chief Executive, Sally Bird

I was delighted to join the BSRA in October 2024 as its new part-time Chief Executive. Responsible for the overall running of the organisation, I have been working hard with David and the Trustees to deliver on their bold and ambitious vision for the years ahead. I bring significant charity sector experience to the BSRA, and am also Director of a second UK charity, Homeshare International. I look forward to using this experience to help expand the BSRA's charitable impact in the next 12 months and specifically to find ways of connecting our experts in the biology of ageing with an increasingly engaged public audience.

Research that can help us understand how the passage of time affects an organism, and increases the risk of developing disease, has great potential to impact us on a personal as well as a societal level. The BSRA is in a unique position to create opportunities for scientists, partners and funders to come together and make real advances in this exciting field. With your support we'll be able to continue this progress. Thank you.

New BSRA Trustees in 2024

Dr Paul Potter, Treasurer

Dr James Murray, Honorary Secretary

Dr Sophie Joanisse, Research Grants Lead

Dr Jon Houseley

Dr Hector Zenil

Elizabeth Mills, OBE

Dr Charalampos (Babis) Rallis

Dr Diana Marcu

Ben Raven, Membership Secretary

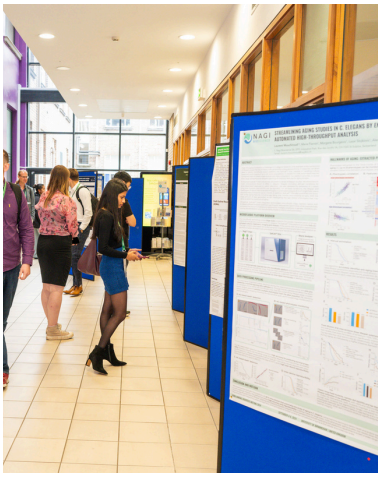
(find details of our full board on page 15)

British Society for Research on Ageing

THE HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR YEAR

The **conference dinner** is always a high point of our Annual Scientific Meeting ...





... as is the **Poster Reception** on the first evening, showcasing the work of Early Career Researchers (ECRs).

The BSRA awarded **Cynthia Kenyon of Calico Life Sciences** the **Lord Cohen of Birkenhead Medal** for her groundbreaking work in the discovery and demonstration of the role of key genes in longevity. Cynthia gave a key note lecture at the 2024 ASM and joins an illustrious list of previous winners.



We launched a **new online Seminar Series for the ageing research community**, led by prominent ageing researchers from institutions around the world.

The BSRA hosted the 11 networks that make up the **UK Ageing Network (UKAN)** in a satellite event before the ASM, providing the only in-person opportunity for the networks to come together during 2024.



British Society for Research on Ageing

OUR VISION

'Together the BSRA will help people live longer and healthier lives'

At an in-person meeting in the spring of 2024, the BSRA Board of Trustees produced a clear Vision for the society moving forward:

The BSRA aims to encourage and support research that will ultimately help people slow biological ageing and thereby remain healthier and free of disease for longer.

To achieve these aims the BSRA needs to work with and for all stakeholders including our members, the general public and donors.

Together the BSRA will help people live longer and healthier lives.

This Vision will be achieved through **5 key objectives** against which our progress in 2024 and beyond can be monitored and our impact measured. Each of these are expanded in the pages that follow:

1. Bring our **scientist members** together
2. Educate the **general public**
3. Advocate for more **funding for high quality research**
4. Raise money to **provide grants** to support excellent research
5. Enable **translation of research** by relevant stakeholders

BRING SCIENTIST MEMBERS TOGETHER

to support each other and discuss the best research avenues to understand and slow human biological ageing, including research carried out in model organisms and in vitro

Our members are integral to all the BSRA does, and creating opportunities for them to come together online and in person is a core objective of our learned Society. In 2024, to further this aim, we successfully:

Increased the number of **BSRA members by over 10%** and broadened membership by reaching out to students, industry, international researchers and institutions.



Increased **income from membership to 2/3 of our total grant spend** and set targets to increase this so that we can continue to support our members financially.

Invited six leading figures in the field of ageing research to share their work in our **online 2024 Seminar Series**, attracting approximately 300 participants.



Hosted our **73rd Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM)** at the University of Birmingham. The event brought together 135 delegates and over 20 speakers for 3 days of stimulating talks, networking opportunities and poster presentations, made possible by generous financial support from the organisations listed on page 14.

OUR PROGRESS

EDUCATE THE PUBLIC

on what we know about the biology of ageing and the need for further evidence-based research

The BSRA is not only a scientific society but a **registered charity** with a commitment to finding ways of engaging with the general public about the value of ageing research. This includes contributing to articles and features in the mainstream media, examples of which (in the Financial Times and the Daily Mail) are linked on the final page.

A **public lecture at the Annual Scientific Meeting** (ASM) is a key part of our public outreach. At our 73rd ASM in Birmingham in September, **Professor Steve Harridge from King's College London**, gave a Public Lecture on exercise and ageing, attended by 70 representatives of the Birmingham's 1000 Elders cohort.



By giving such prominence to the need to educate the general public in their vision for the BSRA, the board of trustees recognise a need to provide high quality information on the biology of ageing. **The BSRA supports the science of ageing as a means of understanding the processes that leave us vulnerable to disease and ill health as we age.**

TO FURTHER OUR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WE HAVE...

... **appointed a Chief Executive**, Sally Bird in October 2024, with a remit to develop the organisation's charitable activities.

... **developed a Public Engagement Strategy** to raise the BSRA's profile in the public space and increase opportunities for scientist experts in the field of ageing research to contribute to the wider ageing debate.

OUR PROGRESS

ADVOCATE FOR MORE FUNDING

for high quality research on ageing through engagement with policy makers and key opinion formers

A critical aspect of our work is to **support scientists** in the field of ageing research by leading the call for more funding to enable their work.

Why is funding needed?

Age is the greatest risk factor for all disease. If scientists can find markers in the ageing process that signal the risk of disease, just as high cholesterol can signal potential heart disease, the impact on the quality of human health would be - literally - life-changing.

- as **individuals**, we would have increased chances of a healthy retirement
- as a **society**, we would have a healthier, more productive workforce
- as a **nation**, we would dramatically reduce the burden on the NHS

The impact of the BSRA

The BSRA is uniquely positioned to make the case for funding for ageing research and its potential to help prevent many different diseases.

Expertise

- Our Chair represented the BSRA at an event on Ageing at the **Royal Society** and discussed ageing research priorities with former Chief Medical Officer, Chris Witty, and Lord Kakkar, Chair of the OSCHR.
- Our Trustees represent scientists and consultants from key **UK institutions and cutting-edge industry**

Breadth

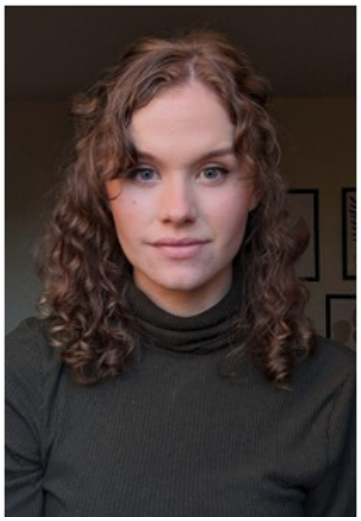
- Our growing membership is drawn from at least **56 UK institutions** involved in ageing research
- Our engagement with industry, clinicians, medical research charities and government agencies gives us the opportunity to create links and **coordinate a strategic approach** to funding opportunities

RAISE MONEY TO PROVIDE GRANTS

to support excellent research into ageing

The generous support of individuals, donors and foundations (acknowledged on page 13) allowed us to support the work of 13 young researchers in 2024. As a member of the **Association of Medical Research Charities** (AMRC), the BSRA has its own Scientific Advisory Board that assesses and awards grant applications.

THE CHERNAJOVSKY FOUNDATION / BSRA PHD AWARD



The Chernajovsky Foundation and The British Society for Research on Ageing awarded PhD project funding to the sum of £67,480.10 to graduate student Kathryn Frost (left), and principal investigator Doctor Helen McGettrick at the University of Birmingham's Institute for Inflammation and Ageing in 2020.

2024 saw the end of the third year of this award, which has made significant progress towards developing a **new treatment for bone diseases that worsen with age.**

THE KORENCHEVSKY PRIZE

This highly competitive prize is awarded each year at the ASM for best Early Career Researcher (ECR) elevated Oral Presentation. In 2024, the prize went to Hanane Hadj-Moussa of the Babraham Institute (pictured right with BSRA Chair, David Weinkove) for her work on **identifying ageing mechanisms** in yeast.



The Korenchevsky Prize includes flights and registration for the **American Aging Association's annual meeting** (Alaska in 2025) and an oral presentation slot there, platforming the best ECR research from BSRA membership to our trans-Atlantic partners.

RAISE MONEY TO PROVIDE GRANTS

to support excellent research into ageing

Small grants that allow a young researcher to travel, present their research and network with colleagues can be a catalyst for launching a successful career. We look forward to hearing about the achievements of our class of '24 in years to come.

'I love the moments where you realise that you are right in it – right in science's past and present. And when you realise that and are given the chance to bounce ideas around with these amazing researchers, you feel like you are a part of science's future too.'

Previous Korenchevsky Prize Winner Mireya Vazquez-Prada

SMALL RESEARCH GRANT

Amy Roberts, King's College London
Marie Lush, University of Derby

TRAVEL GRANT

Marie Korzepa, University of Birmingham
Noviann McLean, University of Kent

SUMMER STUDENTSHIP GRANT

Bradley Elliott and Juan Vaillant De La Puente, University of Westminster
Craig Willis, University of Bradford

POSTER PRIZES

At our 73rd ASM in Birmingham, poster prizes were awarded to Jack Sullivan, Rhiannon Cumming, and Pasquale Putter for 3rd, 2nd, and 1st places

EARLY CAREER COMMERCIALISATION PRIZE

At our 73rd ASM the inaugural Early Career Commercialisation Prize was split between George Han, University of Cambridge and Hanane Hadj-Moussa, Babraham Institute



ENABLE TRANSLATION

of research by relevant stakeholders including industry developing interventions, clinicians and public health practitioners

Promising research in a laboratory might lead to a breakthrough in our understanding of the ageing process, and ultimately to an intervention that could help prevent disease, yet **the process of getting from the lab to a real-world outcome can be long, expensive and complicated** to navigate.

The impact of the BSRA

In 2024, the BSRA showed its commitment to creating opportunities for scientists in the field of ageing to explore ways of translating their laboratory research.

- As a member of the **Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC)**, the BSRA is in discussion with specific disease charities to identify ways our expertise can help them fulfil their objectives. We are grateful to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, The Macular Society and Cancer Research UK for their vision and enthusiasm, and we look forward to developing these and other partnerships in 2025.

- The BSRA hosted a one-day satellite event the day before our annual ASM for the **UK Ageing Networks (UKAN)**, creating a vital opportunity for the 11 interdisciplinary healthy ageing research networks to meet in person. These networks include several clinicians and social scientists. Many see the BSRA as a way to continue their pioneering work.

- **Feedback from the National Mouse Genetics Network (NMGN)** highlights the value of the BSRA's role in bringing people together: 'as a direct result of our attendance [at the ASM], we now have a collaborator... who will feed their data into our map of mouse ageing.'

ENABLE TRANSLATION

of research by relevant stakeholders including industry developing interventions, clinicians and public health practitioners

The impact of the BSRA: our 73rd ASM

Our 73rd ASM in Birmingham had a specific focus on **industry partnerships and commercialisation of research.** Providing multiple opportunities for networking, sharing ideas and showcasing exciting new research, it included:

Early Career Commercialisation Prize
To focus our young researchers on translating their research into real world outcomes, we challenged them to produce a fundable pitch within 24 hours and present this back to a panel.

There were talks from companies including Insilico Medicine, GlycoAge, Nagi Biosciences, Altos Labs, Yakult and Calico Life Sciences, and a cash prize to aid the development of the two winning pitches, and both students will have the opportunity to formally **present their ideas to a panel of investors** at the 2025 ASM in Manchester.

Young Scientists Career Workshop hosted by the BBSRC with participation from the Dunhill Medical Trust and Apollo Ventures

Industry Panel discussion with participants from Calico Life Sciences, Altos Labs, Apollo Ventures and Oxford Immune Algorithmics.

A translational session hosted by the **British Geriatric Society**, as part of a reciprocal initiative to host symposia at each other's annual meetings. The session focussed on **applications of research to improve older people's lives**, with the wider ambition of informing clinically focussed researchers about emerging basic science in biogerontology.

British Society for Research on Ageing

OUR FUTURE

'Together the BSRA will help people live longer and healthier lives'

In 2025, the BSRA is committed to increasing our impact by furthering each of the 5 areas of our vision:

1

Bring scientist members together

grow membership by 50%

aim for **representation at all UK institutions** involved in ageing research

develop innovation and opportunity at the **74th ASM** in Manchester

increase knowledge of work across the ageing research community through the **2025 Seminar Series**

2

Educate the public

appoint **PR professional** to lead the public engagement strategy

increase **opportunities for BSRA expertise** to feature in the public debate

plan and host an online **public lecture series**

3

Advocate for funding

meet with prominent members of the **OSCHR committee** (head of government funding bodies)

prioritise **high-level relationships** with policy-makers, funders and clinicians

4

Raise money for grants

increase the **number and size of BSRA grants**

highlight the achievements of **previous grant winners**

5

Translation of research

position the BSRA as a **hub for translation** opportunities

forge **partnerships** with disease-specific research charities

British Society for Research on Ageing

OUR SUPPORTERS

The BSRA is grateful to everyone that supported the organisation in 2024, including **our members** for their participation, enthusiasm and commitment.

Thank you to the following individuals and organisations for enabling us to continue to promote and fund research into the biology of ageing:

Mr Douglas Anderson
Anonymous
The Chernajovsky Foundation
Mr Lee Dalchow
Dr Bradley Elliott
Dr Tabitha Francis
Professor Janet Lord
Mr Robert Pracey-Smith
The Seavets
Ms Andriana Sotiris
Mrs Rose Tashjian
Mr Richard Tashjian
Ms Pauline Varughese

We are also immensely grateful to the following organisations whose sponsorship of our 73rd ASM in Birmingham contributed to a hugely successful event:

Altos Labs
Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)
Calico Labs
Clinisciences
Generon
Glycan Age
Informed Genomics
Insilico Medicine
Longevity Pledge
Nagi Bioscience
NMGN
Oxford Immune Algorithmics
Proteintech
Starlab
Yakult

British Society for Research on Ageing

GOVERNANCE

BSRA Board of Trustees, as of March 2025

Professor David Weinkove, Chair
Dr James Murray, Honorary Secretary
Dr Paul Potter, Treasurer
Dr Bradley Elliott, Communications
Dr Paul Morgan, ASM 2025
Dr Niharika Duggan, ASM 2024
Associate Professor Ira Milosevic, ASM 2026 & Seminar Series 2024
Dr Sophie Joanisse, Research Grants Lead
Ben Raven, Memberships
Elizabeth Mills, OBE
Tina Woods
Dr Charalampos (Babis) Rallis
Dr Diana Marcu
Dr Jon Houseley
Dr Hector Zenil

We are also grateful to the following outgoing Trustees in 2024 for their energy and commitment:

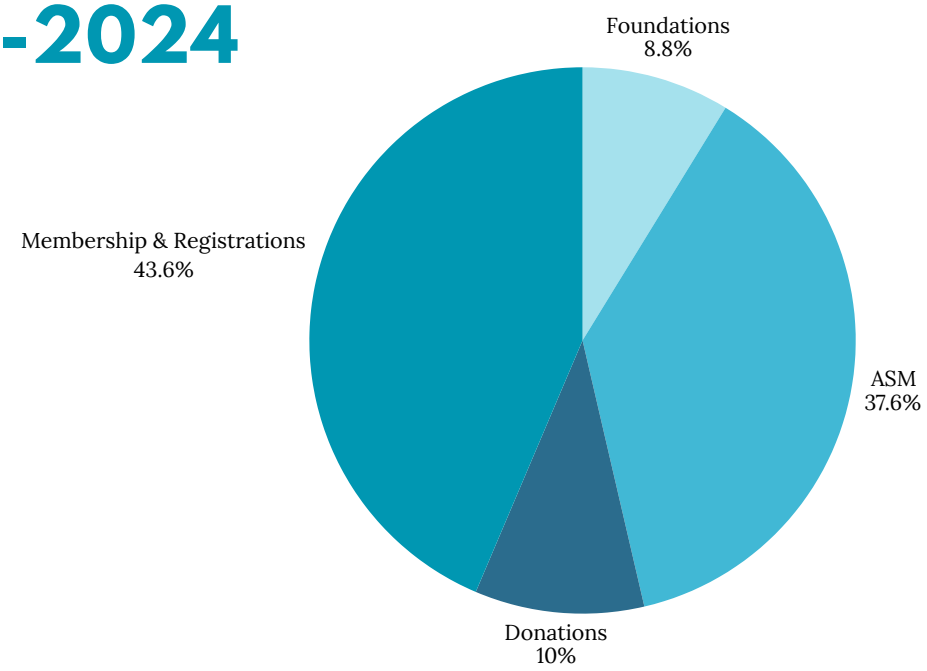
Dr Jed Lye
Adrian Cull
Dr Neil Martin
Dr Cathy Slack
AM Spiroski
Dr Marina Ezcurra

British Society for Research on Ageing

FINANCIAL REVIEW

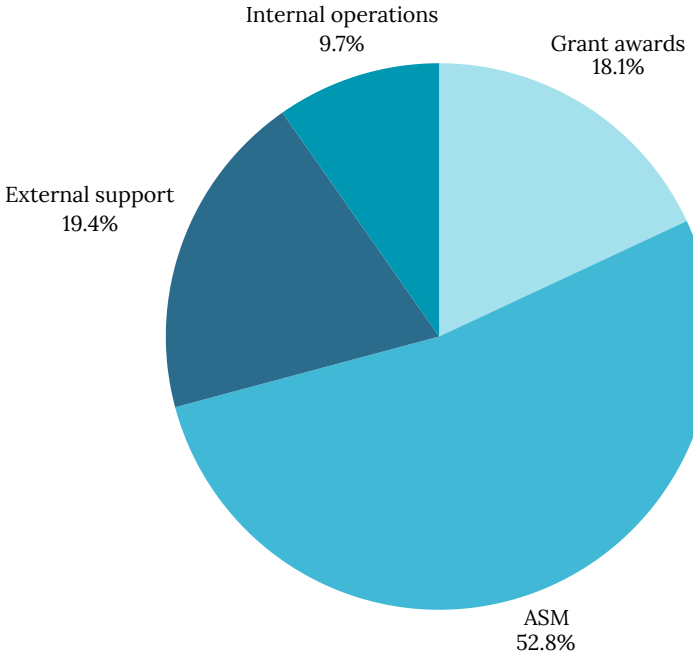
INCOME 2023-2024

In 2023-2024, the BSRA's income was £80,000, down overall on the previous year due to the payment schedule for funding the PhD award. Income from the ASM almost doubled, including sponsorship, and income from donations and membership also increased.



EXPENDITURE 2023-2024

Our total expenditure for 2023-2024 was £72,000, also down due to the payment schedule for the PhD award, funded by The Chernajovsky Foundation.



ABOUT THE BRITISH SOCIETY FOR RESEARCH ON AGEING

The BSRA was formed as the 'Club for Research on Ageing' by Professor Vladimir Korenchevsky (1880-1959) at some point prior to 1939 and thus has a valid claim to be the world's oldest scientific society devoted to research into the biology of ageing.





Articles featuring the BSRA in the mainstream media in 2024:

https://www.ft.com/content/87d1225b-1581-4e34-a570-375fc9f54a45

https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-13846459/The-drugs-slow-ageing-Ozempic-extend-life-five-commonly-used-drugs-reveals-JO-MACFARLANE.html

www.bsra.org.uk **info@bsra.org.uk**

The British Society for Research on Ageing is a registered charity in England, no. 1174127.

BSRA