

In 2008 WAIMR celebrates 10 years since its inception and the many internationally-important discoveries which have transformed it into WA's premier adult medical research institute.



October 20, 2008

Media Statement

AVELEY RESIDENT CALLS FOR DIABETES VOLUNTEERS

With World Diabetes Day 2008 around the corner (Friday November 14), an Aveley researcher is calling for much needed volunteers to help combat childhood diabetes through medical research.

Sarah Lilley at the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR) is the WA coordinator for the Australian Childhood Diabetes DNA Repository which aims to isolate the genetic codes that cause Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes.

Ms Lilley, based at WAIMR's Centre for Diabetes Research said the study which was into its third year, was making great progress but was still in critical need of more volunteers.

"We're calling to all WA families who have a child with diabetes to put their hands up to help research into this condition – a contribution that could help answer key genetic questions like why 10 per cent of children with diabetes have a mother with thyroid problems," she said.

"We know from previous research there can often be a link between a mother's thyroid problems and type 1 diabetes in children, and that's one of the lines of investigation we are pursuing through the genetic samples collected from volunteers.

We're aiming for a total of 3,000 volunteer families, and while we've had fantastic support from hundreds of Australian families, we're going to need more to continue important investigations that could one day lead researchers to the missing piece of the puzzle in diabetes prevention or cure."

The Repository will not only play a key role in Australian research, but has made a global impact, with an international collaboration with a UK-based study run by the Wellcome Trust Case Control Consortium (WTCCC).

The WTCCC study aims to identify common genetic variations causing diabetes in the hope of understanding the disease process and developing more effective treatments.

Head of WAIMR's Centre for Diabetes Research Professor Grant Morahan said Ms Lilley's role was vital in collating precious information that could help unlock the genetic triggers of diabetes.

"The fact that Australian children and their mums and dads are now playing a part in important international studies proves how valuable resources like this are, and Sarah's work is playing a pivotal role in piecing it all together," he said.

The Repository has been funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council, with additional support from the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR), the Diabetes Research Foundation, Diabetes WA and The University of Western Australia.

To find out more about the study, please visit www.acddr.org.au or call (08) 9224 0340.

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WAIMR's Centre for Diabetes Research was established with the support of the Diabetes Research Foundation which will celebrate its 30 year anniversary on World Diabetes Day with a luncheon at Royal Perth yacht Club, where Professor Morahan will inform guests of the team's progress.

WAIMR Director Professor Peter Klinken and Deputy Director Professor Peter Leedman will also address guests at the luncheon.

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