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Media Statement

WA SEARCH ON FOR BEST ‘PERSONAL’ DIET TO PROTECT AGAINST DIABETES

A new WA research project has its sights set on uncovering what type of diet works best to protect people against type 2 diabetes based on the specific genes a person has.

Leading WA diabetes researcher Grant Morahan – who will present an overview of his team’s latest work at a Diabetes Research WA public seminar on Friday November 13 ahead of World Diabetes Day – said the study aimed to help people choose the ideal diet to help reduce their chances of developing type 2 diabetes depending on their individual genetic makeup.

“Everyone knows there are so many diets around and the message from the people behind these diets is usually that theirs is good for everyone, but that’s very unlikely to be the case,” said Professor Morahan.

“This study aims to find the best match of diet to genes, in terms of healthy outcomes.

“We will find what genes interact with different diets to cause type 2 diabetes which will eventually allow us to say what is the best diet for which people and help them navigate the maze of diet information out there to best protect themselves against type 2 diabetes.”

The project will involve researchers from China and the US as well as those from WA’s Centre for Diabetes Research.

Professor Morahan said the study would be done using The Gene Mine resource, which was created by the Centre and harnesses the power of the entire mouse genome for accelerating medical research discoveries.

“If you were to do a human study into this, it would take millions of dollars and thousands of participants and would need to be done over 20 to 30 years,” he explained.

“Using the incredible power of The Gene Mine, we think it can be done in five years, so the ability of this resource to fast-track studies is huge,” he said.

Diabetes Research WA executive director Sherl Westlund described the study as particularly important.

“Research has proven diet and exercise are crucial factors in many cases of type 2 diabetes so to take this knowledge to the next level and personalise diet advice based on the genes you have would be very powerful,” she said.

“With 1.7 million Australians estimated to have diabetes and up to 85 percent of those people having type 2, research like this could have a phenomenal impact on the health of our nation.”

To attend Diabetes Research WA’s lunchtime seminar *Diabetes: Extraordinary Steps to the Future* in Subiaco, RSVP to info@diabetesresearchwa.com.au or call (08) 9224 1006.

Diabetes Research WA has now raised and distributed more than \$4.6 million for diabetes research in WA. Visit www.diabetesresearchwa.com.au for more info.

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