

Screening test for chronic fatigue syndrome on its way

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This is Professor Sonya Marshall-Gradisnik. Credit: Murray Rix

Ground-breaking research at Griffith University into Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) is leading the way for the development of a new screening tool for the condition.

The research team from the National Centre for Neuroimmunology and Emerging Diseases (NCNED), Menzies Health Institute Queensland, has identified new markers that can be used to screen patients and is now looking to partner with diagnostic companies to bring a test to market. The screening test is expected to benefit all those with symptoms of the condition.

"Over the last four years, with support from the Queensland Government and philanthropic donors, we have identified unique markers in CFS patients," says Professor Marshall-Gradisnik.

"This screening test may be expected to become a laboratory standard to provide more certain, and cost-efficient, diagnosis for CFS. Currently patients may be undergoing a range of tests to diagnose for CFS which incurs a significant cost to the health care system.

"CFS, also known as myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME), affects up to 400,000 Australians, many of whom are housebound or bedbound. Patients are isolated and further stigmatised by disbelief of their condition.

"This illness has traditionally been difficult to diagnose, meaning that people can go for months without getting the care and attention they require. We are confident that the new screening test currently in development will provide efficient and increasingly accurate screening for people with CFS. This test may also be used to monitor and track the progression of their illness," says Professor Staines.

Developing this screening test and engaging potential diagnostic companies reflects the innovative research being undertaken to deliver better health outcomes for CFS patients in Australia.

Awareness and support of CFS is currently gathering momentum in

Australia, with a recent Senate Estimate Committee highlighting the requirement for increased research and funding regarding the condition.

Provided by Griffith University

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