Combining knowledge on how the large intestine moves

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Professor Roger Lentle is the only New Zealand scientist contributing to the Colonic motility in health and chronic constipation: from bench to bedside symposium and consensus meeting in Belgium next week. Credit: Massey University

In the last decade there have been significant advances in understanding

how our intestines move and pump food and dispose of waste, thanks to the development of new techniques to analyse the motion of the intestine. Now, this new information must be combined with existing knowledge and communicated to scientists and medics.

Professor Roger Lentle of Massey University's College of Health heads to Belgium next week, to sit on a panel of experts from around the world tasked with reviewing the nomenclature of colonic contractions in the light of new discoveries.

The Colonic motility in health and chronic constipation: from bench to bedside symposium and consensus meeting are being held in Leuven next week. Professor Lentle is the the only contributing scientist from New Zealand.

The symposium allows principal scientists to discuss the newest methods and discoveries. Professor Lentle will be talking on spatiotemporal mapping based on strain rate – a state-of-the-art method for mapping colon contractions developed by the Digesta Group in the physiology department at Massey University.

The method uses high definition videos of the living colon to work out the origin, speed and magnitude of colon contraction and contributed to the discovery of a new type of motility which the group termed haustral progression. Professor Lentle says this method also holds promise for diagnosing motility disorders of the stomach, such as gastroparesis, a condition that affects the pumping process of the stomach.

Professor Lentle and other invited scientists will discuss all publications regarding motility in the colon in both animals and humans. "Hopefully, we will be able to come up with an internationally acceptable nomenclature that effectively incorporates recent discoveries regarding colonic motility.

"It is important in advancing our knowledge of common disorders of colon motility such as diverticulosis, a disorder which has been said to affect more than 30 per cent of people over the age of 40 and more than 65 per cent of people over 80 years of age who eat Western diets."

Provided by Massey University