

Migraines no headache for much longer

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Australian migraine sufferers won't have to live in the dark much longer.

Queensland-led genetics researchers have just launched a final, Phase Three clinical trial for a treatment that could drastically reduce symptoms in around 20 per cent of sufferers.

The trial is headed by Professor Lyn Griffiths, the new Executive Director of QUT's Institute for Health and Biomedical Innovation.

She and her world-leading team have identified several genes implicated in migraine and are translating that [genetic information](#) into new diagnostics and treatments.

Professor Griffiths said one of those genes causes a mutation in a particular enzyme, which stops the enzyme from working properly.

"We're trialling a specific combination of vitamins that can make that enzyme work better and make the gene then function properly," she said.

"Results so far have shown that, taken preventatively, the treatment has a very big impact on migraine - significantly reducing how severe they are, how frequent they are and the pain associated with any migraines.

"That can be very beneficial to sufferers with that [gene mutation](#).

"This last phase in the trial is focused on dosage levels and, if it proves successful, we expect to have a tablet on the market in just over a year."

This week is Headache and Migraine Week, an initiative of the Brain Foundation.

Roughly 12 per cent of Australians suffer from migraine. It affects around 18 per cent of woman, six per cent of men and four per cent of children.

And there is a strong genetic link - about 90 per

cent of people who experience migraines are not the only one in their family.

Professor Griffiths was one of the first scientists in the world to study the DNA links for migraine.

"I suffered from migraine as a teenager, my mum suffered from migraine, but as a [geneticist](#) looking at genes for various disorders I didn't even think about migraine until my son at about the age of four started suffering from migraine, including [visual disturbances](#).

"So when you have someone close in your family who you really care about, you realise just how debilitating, how severe, it is; and I thought something needed to be done.

"We haven't identified all the genes yet. There's still a lot more research needed to identify all of them."

Professor Griffiths is urging people who suffer from migraine to join the Headache Register at headacheaustralia.org.au.

There, sufferers can access the latest in migraine news and research, learn about current and upcoming treatment trials and download a Headache Diary to help them manage their disorder.

Professor Griffiths is confident researchers will find more targeted treatments in the future.

"You can't do this sort of research unless you have people in the public helping you," she said.

"I don't think people realise just how common migraine really is - it's a really common disorder, extremely debilitating and there's a real need to develop new treatments for it.

"We believe there are a number of different gene mutations that play a role in [migraine](#) and those different gene mutations need different treatments."

Provided by Queensland University of Technology

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