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Australia goes ahead with DNA screening study to identify cancer risk in young adults

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The study will develop a new low-cost DNA screening test which will be offered to 10,000 young Australians



A landmark new DNA screening study to identify cancer risk in young adults will go ahead, after Australia's Monash University researcher Associate Professor Paul Lacaze was awarded a $2.97 million Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) grant today.

The study will develop a new low-cost DNA screening test which will be offered to 10,000 young Australians. The new approach, once scaled-up, has the potential to drastically improve access to preventive genetic testing in Australia, and could help make Australia the world’s first nation to offer preventive DNA screening through a public healthcare system.

The new study – ‘DNACancerScreen’ – will investigate the acceptability, cost-effectiveness and scalability of offering preventive DNA screening to healthy young adults aged 18 to 40 years for cancer prevention.

The study aims to fill this gap, identifying people who are living with a heightened cancer risk who would ordinarily be informed only after a potentially incurable cancer is diagnosed.

Together with a team of internationally recognised leaders in genomics, oncology, epidemiology, clinical genetics and health policy, Associate Professor Lacaze will develop a new DNA-based screening tool for the program, and help accelerate its implementation into the Australian healthcare system.