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Australia develops skin microbiopsy device to change skin cancer diagnosis

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The microbiopsy device has been in demand by research institutions investigating a range of skin conditions



A skin microbiopsy device developed by researchers at The University of Queensland (UQ) in Australia, that takes tissue samples smaller than 0.5mm in diameter, could change the way skin cancers and other skin conditions are diagnosed and monitored.

The technology was invented by researchers associated with UQ's Faculty of Medicine Dermatology Research Centre, including Professor H. Peter Soyer, Professor Tarl Prow (now University of South Australia) and Dr Alex Ansaldo, and allows dermatologists to rapidly collect samples of skin without the use of local anaesthetic or sutures.

The microbiopsy technology will undergo final product development after it was licensed to Melbourne-based Trajan Scientific and Medical in a deal struck by UQ's commercialisation company, UniQuest.

The less invasive microbiopsy device would allow dermatologists to better monitor the progression of suspected skin cancers and other skin conditions over time, without the need for more invasive conventional biopsies.

"Conventional skin biopsies are usually 2-4mm in diameter, which means local anaesthetic is required and one or two sutures needed to close the wound. By contrast, the microbiopsy device being developed is relatively painless and leaves a tiny puncture site in the skin that heals in days", said the researchers.