

NTL MEDIA ALERT

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2020
FOR IMMEDIATE USE

AUS researchers seeking 3,500+ volunteers for world's largest eating disorders genetics investigation

Study to pinpoint genes influencing risk of developing eating disorders

Today, September 22, local researchers are calling for more than 3,500 Australian volunteers with first-hand experience of an eating disorder, to enrol in the world's largest ever genetic investigation into three complex, devastating illnesses.

Their call today coincides with an article just published in *MJA Insight*, outlining the substantial advances made in a recent study revealing the psychiatric and metabolic origins to anorexia nervosa and eight genetic variants associated with the illness.¹



The ground-breaking Eating Disorders Genetics Initiative (EDGI) aims to identify the hundreds of genes that influence a person's risk of developing anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge-eating disorder, to improve treatment, and ultimately, save lives.

Eating disorders are not a choice – they are complex mental illnesses that for some, can lead to severe and permanent physical complications, and even death.² Concerningly, eating disorders have one of the highest mortality rates of any mental illness.³⁻⁵ While family and twin studies have confirmed eating disorders run in families, only a handful of the responsible genes have been identified to date, leaving hundreds more to be found.

To hear how cracking the genetic code of eating disorders will improve treatments, and save lives, tee up an interview today with:

| HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS | |
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| Prof Nick Martin | Australian Lead EDGI Investigator, Geneticist & Head, Genetic Epidemiology Research Group, QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute, BRISBANE |
| Millie Thomas | Eating Disorders Recovery Coach, SUNSHINE COAST |
| Dr Sarah Maguire | Clinical Psychologist & Director, InsideOut Institute, SYDNEY |
| Olivia Soha | Founder of eating disorders coaching service & Eating Disorder Recovery Coach, MELBOURNE |
| Dr Sarah Wells | Clinical Psychologist, Child & Adolescent Mental Health Team, Clare House, HOBART |
| Prof Tracey Wade | Matthew Flinders Distinguished Professor, College of Education, Psychology & Social, ADELAIDE |
| Rachel Favilla | Nutritionist, yoga teacher & author who developed anorexia nervosa while undergoing treatment for liver cirrhosis, ADELAIDE |
| Dr Bronwyn Raykos | Senior Clinical Psychologist & Coordinator of the Eating Disorders Programme at the Centre for Clinical Interventions PERTH |
| A/Prof Sue Byrne | Clinical Psychologist, School of Psychology, University of Western Australia, PERTH |
| Distinguished Prof Cindy Bulik | EDGI Principal Investigator, Psychiatrist & Distinguished Professor of Eating Disorders, Department of Psychiatry, School of Medicine, University of North Carolina, USA (available upon request) |
| EATING DISORDER ADVOCACY GROUP REPRESENTATIVES | |
| Mark & Gayle Forbes | Founders of mental health charity, endED, whose daughters have both lived with an eating disorder, SUNSHINE COAST |
| Bronny Carroll | InsideOut Institute Advisory Board Member & mother to a daughter who has been living with anorexia nervosa for 20 years, SYDNEY |
| Dr June Alexander | Author, writing mentor & Academy for Eating Disorders Board member, GEELONG |
| AUSTRALIANS WITH FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE OF AN EATING DISORDER | |
| Lexi, 31 | Clinical nutritionist who endured more than 25 hospitalisations with anorexia nervosa over 18 years, BRISBANE |
| Sophie, 21 | University student diagnosed with anorexia nervosa at 18 years of age, BRISBANE |
| Stephanie, 30 | Office manager & opera singer who battled anorexia nervosa for more than 15 years, SYDNEY |
| Bec, 41 | Business owner & author who battled anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge eating disorder intermittently from the time she was 12, SYDNEY |

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| Emily, 28 | HR lead & gym enthusiast in recovery from anorexia nervosa, SYDNEY |
| Emelia, 34 | Dancer who has wrestled with anorexia nervosa for the past decade, SYDNEY |
| Brittany, 30 | Senior transport operations controller who grappled with anorexia nervosa for eight years, SYDNEY |
| Ash, 28 | Advertising art director who battled anorexia nervosa for four years, SYDNEY |
| Tara, 20 | Medical science student who was diagnosed with anorexia nervosa at 13 years of age, CANBERRA |
| Amy, 33 | Mum & early childhood teacher who waged a decade-long battle with anorexia nervosa, MELBOURNE |
| Chantel, 35 | Mum-of-four continuing to mount a recovery from anorexia nervosa, MELBOURNE |
| Juliana, 26 | University student living with anorexia nervosa who obsessed over her body image & weight for most of her teens, ADELAIDE |
| Georgia, 22 | Community mental health worker who harnessed her personal experience of anorexia nervosa for good, ADELAIDE |
| Marie, 25 | Receptionist whose new-found love of Pilates helps her manage her eating disorders, PERTH |
| Katie, 27 | Dietetic student & former model who was diagnosed with anorexia nervosa at 22, PERTH |
| Eloise, 24 | Influencer, avid traveller & eating disorders coach who has waged an almost-life-long battle with binge eating disorder, PERTH |
| DIGITAL MEDIA KIT + VISION | Digital media kit available – www.edgimediakit.org.au Broadcast vision available for download – https://vimeo.com/458058145/bd7600402d |
| INTERVIEWS | Kirsten Bruce, Mel Kheradi & Holly Hamilton Green VIVA! Communications T 0401 717 566 0421 551 257 0434 799 839 02 9968 3741/1604 E: kirstenbruce@vivacommunications.com.au mel@vivacommunications.com.au holly@vivacommunications.com.au |

References

1. Bulik, C., Martin, N. *Finding pieces of the puzzle: Australia and New Zealand anchoring the Eating Disorders Genetics Initiative (EDGI)* 2020.
2. National Eating Disorders Collaboration. *What is an eating disorder?* [cited October 2019]; Available from: <https://www.nedc.com.au/eating-disorders/eating-disorders-explained/something/whats-an-eating-disorder/>.
3. Ministry of Health. *Future Directions for Eating Disorders Services in New Zealand*. 2008. [cited Dec, 2019]; Available from: <https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/future-directions-eating-disorders-services-nz-v2.pdf>.
4. Smink, F.R.E., D. van Hoeken, and H.W. Hoek, *Epidemiology of eating disorders: incidence, prevalence and mortality rates*. Current psychiatry reports, 2012. 14(4): p. 406-414.
5. Fichter, M. and N. Quadflieg, *Mortality in eating disorders - Results of a large prospective clinical longitudinal study*. The International journal of eating disorders, 2016. 49.