The Anorexia Nervosa Genetics Initiative (ANGI)

About ANGI

- The Anorexia Nervosa Genetics Initiative (ANGI) is the world’s largest and most rigorous genetic investigation of anorexia nervosa to date.
- The international study aims to detect genetic variations that may play a role in the potentially life-threatening illness.
- ANGI’s ultimate goal is to transform current knowledge on the causes of eating disorders and to work towards a greater understanding, and ultimately improved treatment and outcomes for anorexia nervosa.
- Study centres are located in a combined Australia and New Zealand site, Denmark, Sweden and the United States.
- The QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute, Brisbane, is the Australian partner in the research study.
- Internationally, the centres are aiming to recruit more than 13,000 women and men who:
  - Have experienced anorexia nervosa;
  - Currently have anorexia nervosa.
- Australia aims to attract 3,000 blood donors by August 2016.
- 2,200 Australian volunteers have been recruited to date (March 30, 2016).

Anorexia nervosa and genes

- Researchers have long known of a genetic link to anorexia nervosa, with decades of studies indicating genes play a role in the risk of developing the illness.
- Identification of the actual genes that predispose individuals to anorexia nervosa could revolutionise future research into causes, treatment and prevention of the illness.
- ANGI researchers will analyse DNA samples to investigate and identify specific genes that may be associated with anorexia nervosa.
- This analysis process, known as a ‘genome-wide association study’, involves comparing the genes of people who have experienced anorexia nervosa to the genes of those who have never had the eating disorder.
- DNA samples will be extracted from blood donations.
- Researchers will compare the genetic variations in the DNA of those with and without anorexia nervosa, to identify the gene regions that influence risk for the disorder.
- DNA and blood samples will be bio-banked for immediate and future genetic analysis.
- Identifying genes associated with anorexia nervosa will help experts to better identify those who may be more vulnerable to the illness, allowing healthcare professionals to manage their health accordingly.

Source: student.societyforscienc.org
ANGI study participation

- ANGI study participation is strictly confidential. Blood samples used to extract DNA which will be bio-banked for immediate and future genetic analysis under strict confidentiality.
- ANGI researchers will analyse all DNA samples collected to investigate any specific genes that may be associated with anorexia nervosa.
- ANGI study participation is open to Australian females and males of any age (children require parental consent) who:
  - Currently have anorexia nervosa; or
  - Have had anorexia nervosa at some stage in their lives.
- ANGI study participants will:
  - Participate in a 10-minute online survey at angi.qimr.edu.au.
    QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute investigators will then evaluate the online survey responses and identify suitable study participants who have experienced a particular cluster of symptoms relating to anorexia nervosa.
- Those suitable for the study will:
  - Be contacted by the QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute project team to confirm their willingness to provide a blood sample and to learn more about the study’s requirements.
  - Receive a blood collection and information kit (for suitable participants only) by mail and will be required to give blood at a local pathology clinic at their convenience.
- All sample kit delivery and collection costs will be covered by QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute.

ANGI enrolment details
ANGI researchers are currently recruiting participants Australia-wide.

To learn more, or to register for the study:

- Visit angi.qimr.edu.au
- Email angi@qimrberghofer.edu.au
- Freecall ANGI on 1800 257 179.

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For more information about the ANGI study, please contact Kirsten Bruce or Mark Henderson from VIVA! Communications on 0401 717 566 / 0431 465 004.