NEWS & PUBLICATIONS
News
Subscribe to news
RSS feeds
Archive
Publications
Branding
Podcasts

Genetic cause for migraine found

26 September 2010

A genetic defect that is a key cause of migraines has been iden researchers funded by the Medical Research Council (MRC). The study offers researchers new hope for finding better treatment common form of migraine.

Scientists at the MRC Functional Genomics Unit based at the Un of Oxford and colleagues in Canada have identified a specific g TRESK found in a family suffering from migraines. This gene wa be directly attributable as a cause and could be a significant re the one in five women and one in ten men worldwide who suffe migraines.

The study found that if the gene known as TRESK does not wor properly, it can more easily trigger sensitive pain centres in the and cause a severe headache. The international team used DN samples from people with common familial migraine to identify t defective gene.

A migraine is a severe, long-lasting headache usually felt as a t pain at the front or on one side of the head. Some people can warning visual disturbance before the start of the headache ca aura and many people also have symptoms, such as nausea ar sensitivity to light during the headache itself. Until now, the ge responsible have been unknown. The World Health Organizatio rates migraine as a leading cause of disability worldwide and it estimated to be the most costly neurological disorder in Europe

Dr Zameel Cader from the Medical Research Council Functional Unit at the University of Oxford said:

> *"We have now made a major step forward in our understanding people suffer with migraine and how in certain cases, your famil literally give you a headache! Previous studies have identified pa our DNA that increase the risk in the general population but hav found genes which can be directly responsible for common migra What we've found is that migraines seem to depend on how sen our nerves are in the pain centres of the brain. This finding shou lead to the key player which controls this excitability and will giv real opportunity to find a new way to fight migraines and improv quality of life for those suffering."*

The study is published in *Nature Medicine* today. It was funded Medical Research Council, Genome Canada, Genome Quebec, E Therapeutics, the Wellcome Trust and Pfizer.

This work forms part of the MRC's commitment to link laborator knowledge to clinical investigation and deliver discoveries that the development of new treatments and medical practices. The invests strongly in basic and other research on natural mechan protect the body against disease.

1. For media queries, please contact the MRC press office on 02 6011 or press.office@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk

About The Wellcome Trust