

2018 Translational Research Innovation Awards

Project Title:

Targeted and personalised early detection of melanoma using a 3D teladermatology network

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Project Summary:

Our end-goal at the Dermatology Research Centre is 'A World Without Melanoma'. The most effective method in preventing the impact melanoma has on patients and the community is to detect it as early as possible. Australia has the highest rate of melanoma incidence in the world, yet we have no population-based screening programs. Furthermore, there is currently no standardised process for assessing a person's risk to melanoma. Our vision is to see a screening program for individuals who are at high risk of melanoma become standard practice in Australian health care.

To transition our research into a reality, we have created a protocol to identify a person's risk to melanoma by combining genetic sequencing with their medical history along with their appearance such as hair/eye/skin colour and number of moles. Furthermore, we have designed a surveillance program suitable for high risk individuals that involves 3D whole body imaging to map and monitor moles overtime, allowing us to more easily and quickly identify any mole changes that may be indicative of melanoma.

Our next step is to test our surveillance program in a randomised controlled trial so we can assess the health and cost benefits our program offers. The PARF award has made it possible to commence this trial in early 2018.

Research Benefits:

The aim of our research is to improve early detection of melanoma in Australia, and ultimately save lives.

To achieve this, our team needs to prove that our surveillance program and melanoma risk assessment will benefit patients and the Australian economy through detecting melanoma earlier than standard care. This trial will allow us to assess the value our program has on health outcomes and healthcare costs compared to the status quo. These results will profoundly impact our campaign towards establishing a nation-wide melanoma surveillance program using genetic sequencing and 3D imaging technology.

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