

RCPA supports Cancer Council's announcement on Lynch syndrome

The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA) strongly agrees with today's announcement from Cancer Council Australia regarding the hereditary condition, Lynch syndrome. Their findings show that testing all bowel cancer cases for Lynch syndrome would be a cost-effective way of revealing the thousands of currently undiagnosed Australians with the condition around the country.

The study, undertaken by Cancer Council NSW and published in *Medical Journal Australia*, evaluated the health impact and cost-effectiveness of systematic testing for Lynch syndrome in people with incident colorectal cancer in Australia. According to Cancer Council, it was one of the most comprehensive evaluations undertaken in any country of the cost-effectiveness of systematic testing, cascade testing, and subsequent surveillance for Lynch syndrome.

Spokesperson for the RCPA, Professor Anthony Gill, Professor of Surgical Pathology at University of Sydney said,

"We fully support the statement released today by Cancer Council, which recommends testing all bowel cancer cases for Lynch syndrome. Whilst this testing is already happening in most histopathology laboratories in Australia, this new study supports these efforts by showing that routine testing of all bowel cancers would be cost-effective and has the potential to prevent 80 bowel cancer deaths per year," said Prof Gill.

Lynch syndrome is an inherited genetic mutation which gives people an increased chance of developing certain cancers across their lifetime, often at a younger age than the general population.¹ It is associated with an increased risk of up to twelve different cancers but most commonly bowel and endometrial cancers. As it is inherited, a parent with Lynch syndrome has a 50% chance of passing the condition on to their children.

"It is estimated that almost 100,000 Australians have a Lynch syndrome gene mutation, however only about 5% of those people are aware that they are affected. If Lynch syndrome is confirmed in one family member then genetic testing can be made available to at-risk relatives which would ultimately help us to make the diagnosis sooner, which would therefore save lives and also reduce the burden on the Australian healthcare system.

"It is also important to note that none of this would be made possible without the essential role that pathologists play. Pathology is absolutely integral to the routine testing which has been recommended by Cancer Council. It is the foundation for the clinical practice of medicine, paving the way to the appropriate diagnosis, management and treatment of diseases such as this," concluded Prof Gill.

For more information on the RCPA, visit www.rcpa.edu.au or see our updates on Facebook or Twitter - @PathologyRCPA #RCPA #pathology #MedicineIsPathology.

¹ <https://lynchsyndrome.org.au/the-facts/what-is-lynch-syndrome/>

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About the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia:

The RCPA is the leading professional organisation representing pathologists, medical specialists and scientists who provide pathology testing in Australasia. Its mission is to train and support pathologists and to improve the use of pathology testing to achieve better healthcare.

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