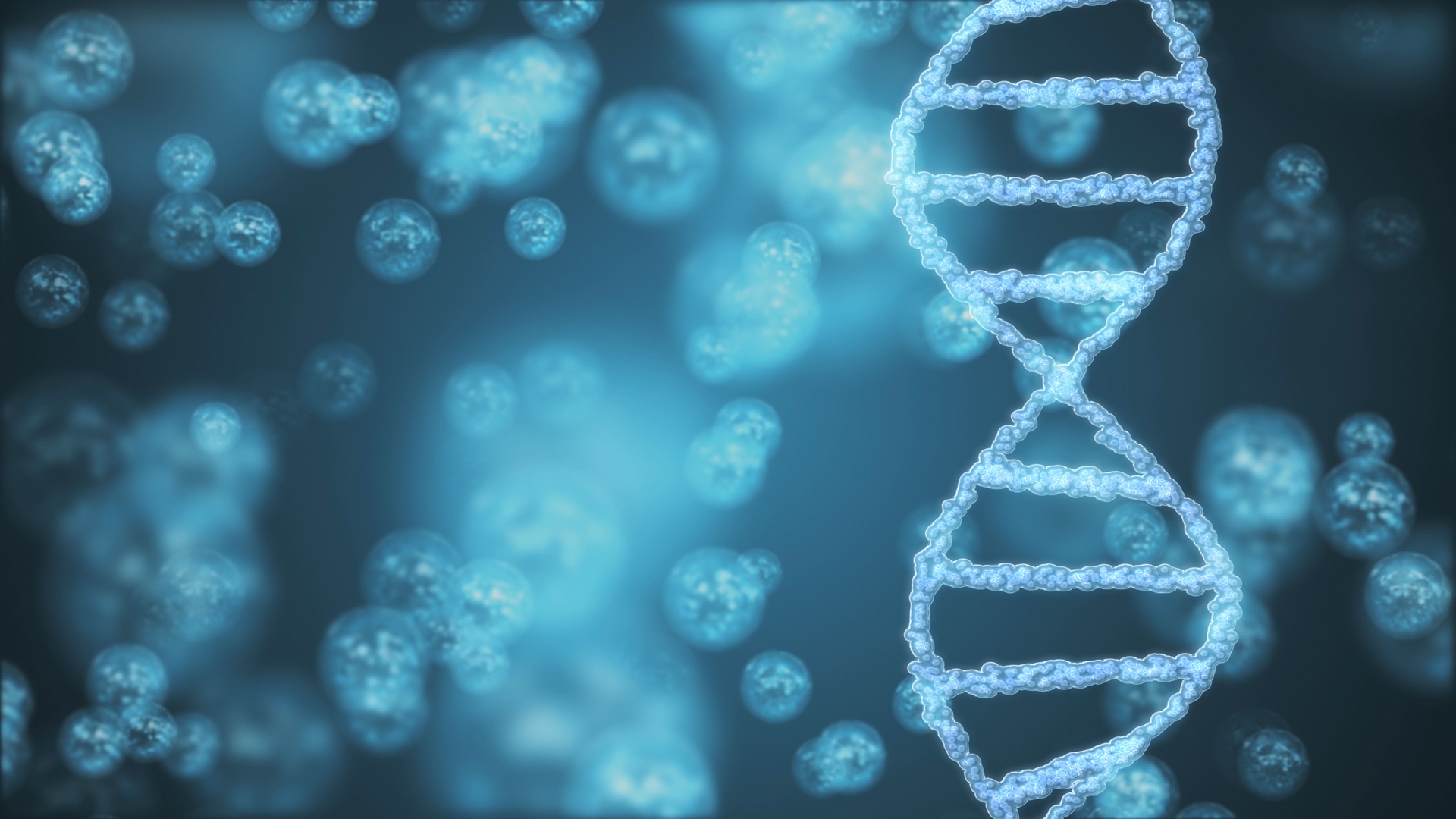
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**NTL MEDIA ALERT EMBARGOED: TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2020**

**NZ researchers seeking 3,500+ volunteers for   
 world’s largest eating disorder genetics investigation**

**Today, Tuesday, March 10, local researchers are calling for more than 3,500 New Zealand volunteers aged 16 years and over, with first-hand experience of an eating disorder, to enrol in the world’s largest ever genetic investigation into the complex, devastating illnesses.**

**Their call coincides with publication of an article in the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners’ (RNZCGP) *GP Pulse*, outlining the significance of this investigation into the biological components that heighten a person’s risk of developing anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge-eating disorder.**

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.1 Concerningly, eating disorders have one of the highest mortality rates of any mental illness.1,2,3 While family and twin studies have confirmed that 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 ultimately save lives, tee up an interview with:

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| **EXPERTS** | |
| **Prof Cynthia Bulik** | Distinguished Professor of Eating Disorders & Founding Director, University of North Carolina Center of Excellence for Eating Disorders & Principal Investigator, Eating Disorders Genetics Initiative (EDGI), *NORTH CAROLINA & SWEDEN* *(****VISITING******CHRISTCHURCH****)* |
| **Prof Martin Kennedy** | Genetics researcher, University of Otago & Co-lead Investigator, EDGI NZ, ***CHRISTCHURCH*** |
| **Dr Jenny Jordan** | Senior Lecturer, University of Otago & Co-lead Investigator, EDGI NZ, ***CHRISTCHURCH*** |
| **Prof Lois Surgenor** | Associate Dean, Health Sciences & Professor in Psychological Medicine, University of Otago, ***CHRISTCHURCH*** |
| **Rachel Lawson** | Consultant Clinical Psychologist & Clinical Head, South Island Eating Disorders Service, ***CHRISTCHURCH*** |
| **Dr Cameron Lacey** | Senior Lecturer at the Maori Indigenous Health Institute, Otago University, ***CHRISTCHURCH*** |
| **Dr Roger Mysliwiec** | Co-founder & Director, New Zealand Eating Disorders Clinic, ***AUCKLAND*** |
| **Dr Andrea LaMarre** | Researcher & Lecturer in Critical Health Psychology, Massey University, ***AUCKLAND*** |
| **Emma Thompson** | Team Leader, Central Region Eating Disorder Service, ***WELLINGTON*** |
| **Trudy Dent** | Clinical Nurse Specialist, Southern Support Eating Disorder (SSED) Service, ***DUNEDIN*** |
| **EATING DISORDER ADVOCACY GROUP REPRESENTATIVE** | |
| **Genevieve Mora** | Eating disorders advocate & Co-founder, Voices of Hope, ***AUCKLAND*** | |
| **NEW ZEALANDERS WITH EXPERIENCE OF AN EATING DISORDER** | |
| **Megan, 23** | ‘Health navigator’ who spent eight years battling anorexia nervosa, ***CHRISTCHURCH*** | |
| **Trudi (Megan’s mum)** | Mum to Megan, 23, who cared for her daughter while ill with anorexia nervosa, ***CHRISTCHURCH*** |
| **Samantha, 22** | Café assistant & keen horse rider who spent her teens battling anorexia nervosa, ***CHRISTCHURCH*** |
| **Angela, 49** | Mother-to-two & writing enthusiast who battled bulimia nervosa for over a decade, ***AUCKLAND*** |
| **Caitlin, 30** | Operations manager & cooking enthusiast diagnosed with anorexia nervosa in her late twenties, ***AUCKLAND*** |
| **Jess, 27** | Eating disorders recovery coach whose love of dance fuelled her recovery from anorexia nervosa*,* ***AUCKLAND*** |
| **Claudia, 21** | University student, yoga teacher who lost her teenage years to anorexia nervosa, ***AUCKLAND*** |
| **Maddie, 24** | Youth support worker & nature lover who waged a decade-long battle with anorexia nervosa, with her twin, Libby, ***AUCKLAND*** |
| **Libby, 24** | Student & personal trainer who spent her childhood & teens wrestling anorexia nervosa alongside her twin, Maddie, ***WELLINGTON*** |
| **Claireabelle, 27** | Bride to be, nanny & social influencer who has experienced a trifecta of eating disorders, ***TIMARU*** |
| **DIGITAL MEDIA KIT + VISION** | **Digital media kit –** [**www.edgimediakit.co.nz**](http://www.edgimediakit.co.nz)  **Broadcast vision available for download –** [**www.vimeo.com/vivacomms/edginzvnr**](http://www.vimeo.com/vivacomms/edginzvnr) |
| **INTERVIEWS** | **Kirsten Bruce & Mel Kheradi**  **VIVA! Communications**  **M 021 279 0816 |+61 401 717 566 | M +61 421 551 257**  **E** [**kirstenbruce@vivacommunications.com.au**](mailto:kirstenbruce@vivacommunications.com.au)**;** [**mel@vivacommunications.com.au**](mailto:mel@vivacommunications.com.au) |

**References**

1. National Eating Disorders Collaboration. *What is an eating disorder?*. October 2019]; Available from: <https://www.nedc.com.au/eating-disorders/eating-disorders-explained/something/whats-an-eating-disorder/>.

2. 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.

3. 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.