There’s a lot you can learn from twins! Scientists from as far back as the late 1800s have studied twins to try and answer the age old question of nature versus nurture. Twin studies are even more important today as our scientists know so much more about how genetics impact on our behaviour as well as our health.

25 to 30 years ago it was generally thought that learning and experiences were the primary explanation for individual differences, but the systematic study of twins has shown that genes have these pervasive influences on the way we think, feel and behave in general.

There is a famous story about the identical “giggle twins” (because of their indistinguishable laugh) from England who were separated at birth and went to live on opposite sides of the country in vastly different economic conditions. When they discovered each other and were reunited 40 years later they were amazed by the parallels in their lives… including that both had miscarriages followed by the birth of two boys and one girl.

Scientists at QIMR have an international reputation for their work in genetics. They are calling for twins to register with the Queensland Twin Registry (Q-Twin) and be part of the next medical discovery. QIMR is currently conducting the Older Australian Twins Study (OATS). Professor Nick Martin, head of QIMR’s Genetic Epidemiology Unit, said their aim is to find out what influences memory and thinking as people age, in order to develop new approaches to slow the ageing process as well as prevent age-related decline in function and age-related diseases such as Alzheimer’s.

“Age affects us all in different ways, but it’s still unclear why some people age better, with good mental and physical abilities, compared with others,” said Professor Martin.

“It’s a very exciting time for this research, but we need more twins to register so we can ask them to take part in this and other research projects.”

Bevan and Kevin of Theebine in Queensland (pictured below) were amongst the first twins to take part in the Older Australian Twins Study. “We took part because we wanted to help Queensland research,” they said. “It was fun and if it’s going to benefit someone down the track then we should all consider doing what we can for medical research.”

Q-Twin is open to all ages and all twins, whether or not they are identical. Triplets and other multiples are also eligible to join. To register visit www.qtwin.org.au or telephone toll-free 1800 257 179. Registration is free and there is no obligation to participate in research.

OATS is supported by a National Health & Medical Research Council / Ageing Well Ageing Productively grant.
The 25th Governor of Queensland, Her Excellency Ms Penelope Wensley AO has very kindly accepted our invitation to be Patron of QIMR.

Ms Wensley was born in Toowoomba and graduated from the University of Queensland with a Bachelor of Arts with First Class Honours. She joined the Australian Foreign Service in 1968 and represented Australia in a wide range of positions overseas, in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas and the Pacific.

Ms Wensley has achieved international recognition for her contribution to the United Nations.

We are looking forward to working with Ms Wensley who has a strong interest in promoting Australian excellence in science.

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QIMR MOURNS The Loss Of A Great Leader

“It is impossible to overstate the contribution that Sir Bruce has made to QIMR” - Michael Good

Long-standing QIMR Chairman, Sir Bruce Watson, sadly passed away late last year.

QIMR Director, Professor Michael Good, said “It is impossible to overstate the contribution that Sir Bruce has made to QIMR”.

Sir Bruce served QIMR for many years. He was initially approached by former Director Chev Kidson to join the QIMR Trust in 1988 and then served the Institute in the capacity of the inaugural Chair of the Cooperative Research Centre for Vaccine Technology (1993-2000) before becoming Chair of QIMR Council in 1999.

Suncorp and QIMR Working together to fight skin cancer

We are working hard to remind people of the importance of safety when out in our harsh sun.

Suncorp has supported the Queensland Institute of Medical Research since 2004 and in this time has raised over $1 million for skin cancer research.

Every year, almost 400,000 Australians are diagnosed with skin cancer, costing the nation around $300 million in treatments annually. The deadliest form of skin cancer, melanoma, claims the lives of over 1,200 Australians every year.

QIMR is conducting ongoing studies aimed at discovering other causes and risk factors for skin cancer in order to develop better diagnostics and community education programs.

We would like to say a big Thank You to Suncorp for their SUNWISE education program and for encouraging people to support QIMR’s research by making a donation at their local Suncorp branch. Visit their website www.suncorpsunwise.com.au and see what an amazing job they are doing to help all Queenslanders.

If we deal with skin cancer, our children won’t have to.

Join the fight today.
Visit a Suncorp branch to donate.
I believe in putting back into the community and it is a pleasure and privilege to support the dedicated scientists at QIMR.

Knights of the Round Table

Once a year an elite group of men and women from across Queensland’s corporate sector join forces to raise the funds needed to continue to develop vital immunotherapy and genetic research at QIMR.

In 2008 the gallant Knights of the Round Table raised the funds needed to support a new QIMR project on breast cancer, a cancer that affects 1 in 12 Australian women.

One of these women is our own Dr Michelle Wykes, a Senior Research Officer in QIMR’s Molecular Immunology Lab. Michelle’s research work focuses on understanding how malaria parasites kill memory B cells – resulting in no long term immunity to malaria (when people contract chicken pox and measles, for example, they are immune to re-infection because the body ‘remembers’ the viruses and prevents them from invading the body again. The cells that do the ‘remembering’ are known as ‘memory B cells’).

In December of 2005, Michelle visited her doctor for a routine check up and mammogram. As part of the screen, a lump was discovered and an immediate biopsy taken. Life went on as usual – working hard in the lab and attending the Australasian Society for Immunology Conference in Melbourne a few days later. At the conference she received a text message saying “the lump is a malignant tumour!”

“As a scientist, my first thoughts were to learn as much as I could about breast cancer, like survival rates and other statistics,” said Michelle. “I spoke to my doctors and read hundreds of papers and studies so I could arm myself with information.”

“As a mother, the last thing I wanted to do was to upset my son by getting all negative or emotional.”

Michelle said she was lucky because her cancer was caught early and that thanks to medical research, better diagnostic tests and treatments are becoming available.

“This is why it’s so important to support research. If you, or someone you love, need medical care, you will want to receive the most advanced medical treatment available and advances are only possible through dedicated research.”

We have some amazing supporters in Toowoomba and Del Fitton is one of the best! Since 1999 Del and her son Ron from Fitton Insurance Brokers have raised over $200,000 for cancer research at QIMR through events held during the Darling Downs Equine Extravaganza.

The Fitton Insurance Charity Race Day and Stallion Tender are held as part of the three day Extravaganza and the proceeds are donated to charity with the major beneficiary being QIMR.

The event is on again this year from Friday 25th September to Monday 28th September 2009 and everyone is welcome. We highly recommend it as a glorious mini holiday where you get to spend the weekend in beautiful Toowoomba (the Carnival of Flowers is also on) and help QIMR at the same time - so start planning your trip now.

The program includes a cocktail party, Race Day, Stallion Tender, Equine Hall of Fame Luncheon and Thoroughbred Stud Tours.

Enquires please call Fitton Insurance Brokers on (07) 4630 1379 or mail@fittonins.com.au or check our website as more details become available www.qimr.edu.au

A special thank you to Mr Kevin Dixon, Managing Director of “Racetree” for his wholehearted support through the donation of two highly sought after stallion services to the 2008 Fitton Charity Stallion Tender. www.racetree.com.au
It was wonderful to see QIMR scientists listed as achievers in a newspaper magazine profiling the Smart State’s 50 best and brightest - a resounding testament to the quality of research being conducted at the Institute.

Professor Nick Martin heads the Genetic Epidemiology Laboratory and was recently elected to the prestigious Australian Academy of Science for his important contributions to the genetics of human behaviour and complex diseases. He and his 70 strong research staff are robust contributors to the genome-wide association scan studies currently revolutionising genetics research around the world. This year they have found a gene linked to melanoma, another to blue eyes, and are currently pinpointing genes responsible for moles, depression and dependence on alcohol and nicotine.

Dr Stuart MacGregor is the young genetic epidemiologist in Professor Martin’s group who led the melanoma study team. Stuart recently published their findings, that variations on the human chromosome 20 indicate susceptibility to melanoma, in the high profile journal, Nature Genetics. A trained mathematician, he developed special computer software in order to analyse the huge amounts of data generated from the genome-wide scan which other geneticists around the world are now using.

My own role as Co-Chair of the Health Stream at the Prime Minister’s 2020 Summit and the privilege of being made an Officer of the Order of Australia were also recognised in the magazine feature. These two honours are, without doubt, a direct reflection of the hard work and dedication of the entire Institute. My own research on vaccines to combat Group A streptococcus and malaria is almost at the clinical trial stage, the success of which can only have a positive impact on public health around the world.

We are looking forward to another brilliant year at QIMR and I extend my sincere personal thanks to each and every person who contributes in some way to our success. A special thanks to our donors – the individuals, families, community groups and companies who are an important part of our organisation and who share our belief in - and commitment to - a healthier world.

Over the last few weeks many of our friends and supporters have assisted QIMR by taking part in some important market research conducted by Colmar Brunton on behalf of the Institute. We would like to thank each and every person who participated. Their valuable input has helped us gain an understanding of community perceptions which will assist considerably in our future planning for the Institute.

Vivienne Johnson
Senior Manager - External Relations
We Salute Some
SPECIAL FRIENDS...

Each year QIMR acknowledges some extraordinary people whose support of medical research has been outstanding.

We congratulate the following people:-

HUMANITARIAN AWARD
Mrs Marno Parsons, AM

2008/09 AMBASSADORS
Muriel Comino
Jean Conroy
Sunny Drescher
Betty Harrison
Pat King
Beth McLary
Anne Stanton

Donation Form
DONATIONS OVER $2 ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

☐ Yes, I will help the scientists at the Queensland Institute of Medical Research with their world class research:

Name ___________________________________________
Address __________________________________________
_________________________________________ Postcode _____________
Phone number _______________________________________
Mobile _____________________________________________

DONATION AMOUNT
☐ $10 ☐ $20 ☐ $50 ☐ $100 ☐ Other $ __________

☐ Please find enclosed my cheque/money order payable to QIMR or
☐ Please charge my ☐ Visacard ☐ Mastercard

CARD NUMBER

CARDHOLDER’S NAME

EXPIRY DATE CARDHOLDER’S SIGNATURE

☐ Monthly donations:
Please deduct a monthly donation of $ ____________ from my credit card until I advise otherwise.
Signed _______________________________________

Thank you very much. Monthly donations help significantly in reducing our postage costs.

FURTHER INFORMATION
Please ensure that you have also filled in your contact details above.

☐ I am considering leaving a bequest to QIMR in my Will – please send me the Wills kit.
☐ I would like more information about bequests.
  Please telephone me on ______________________
☐ Please send me more information about research at QIMR
☐ I would like a donor liaison officer to visit me
☐ I would like to take a tour of the Institute

Please post this to:
Queensland Institute of Medical Research
Reply Paid 70885
ROYAL BRISBANE HOSPITAL QLD 4029
No stamp required.
A Unique Opportunity to make a CONTRIBUTION TO SCIENCE

The QIMR Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) has a vacancy for a lay person, who is independent of QIMR, does not have close relatives who are associated with QIMR, and has never been involved in the use of animals in scientific or teaching activities, either in their employment or beyond their undergraduate university education.

The person we are seeking would be viewed by a wider community as bringing a completely independent view to the AEC.

QIMR AEC is a committee established by QIMR Council to ensure maintenance of ethical standards in research and compliance with regulatory guidelines.

For information please contact the QIMR Regulatory Affairs Manager, Dr Agnieszka Mitchell
Phone 3362 0241
Email Agnieszka.Mitchell@qimr.edu.au
or the QIMR AEC Secretary
Ms Jo Chow
Phone 3362 0259
Email Jo.Chow@qimr.edu.au

We would just like to say

Thank You...

WITCHERY
for your passionate support of QIMR for many years.
State Manager
Joy Fear (right) and Amy

Thank You...

KIP WIGHTMAN
for donating your $5,000 prize money from the Jupiter's Casino celebrity Indy poker tournament to QIMR.
Former Miss Indy Bronte Tagliani and Kip Wightman with the winner’s cheque. It takes a very charitable man to part with a cheque like that!

Thank You...

BRITISH CLASSIC CAR CLUB
for organising the “All British Day” that raises funds for QIMR
Mary and Bill Prater who won the award for most outstanding contribution to the All British Day.

Thank You...

To the Toowoomba Golf Club Charity Golf Day Committee
Clive Berghofer witnesses the changing of the guard – last Year’s recipient Del Fitton (centre) hands over the Clive Berghofer Award to Robina Rush, representing the Women Members of the golf club.

Thank You...

Sue Hanrahan
from Rockhampton who very kindly requested donations to QIMR in lieu of gifts at her recent 60th birthday party.

Thank You...

Well known entertainer Goran Sedlar has released a limited edition CD containing six of his original tracks. The CD sells for $20 and he is donating all the proceeds to QIMR. His goal is to raise $10,000 for cancer research.

Since Goran’s numerous appearances on Brisbane television, the project has gained momentum and is receiving wide support from major companies and various radio stations.
For more information on this project and where you can purchase a copy of the CD please send an email to sedlar@optusnet.com.au.
We are very grateful to Goran for his support and commitment to QIMR.