

Researchers receive largest single collection of psoriasis DNA samples

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Millions of Americans struggling with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis are one step closer to a cure with the release of the first National Psoriasis Victor Henschel BioBank DNA samples for use in research at the University of Michigan Health System; research that hopes to uncover the unknowns about the genetics of psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis.

A disabling and disfiguring disease of the immune system that appears on the skin, [psoriasis](#) is the most common autoimmune disease in the country, affecting as many as 7.5 million Americans, yet it is one of the most under-researched. Up to 30 percent of people with psoriasis develop psoriatic arthritis, a related joint disease.

"Because we will be studying many thousands of genes, and because the [genetic differences](#) that predispose people to psoriasis can be subtle, this type of research requires thousands of cases and controls to yield statistically significant results," says James T. Elder, M.D., Ph.D., the Kirk D Wuepper Professor of Molecular Genetic Dermatology. "That's why the large number of Biobank samples is so important."

In the past few years, new discoveries into the hereditary factors of psoriasis have been unveiled. The National Psoriasis Victor Henschel BioBank is a collection of [DNA samples](#) and clinical information used by scientists to advance the field of psoriasis genetics--to fill the gap between what is known about psoriasis genetics and what's not.

Elder and his team of researchers received the first 1,250 BioBank DNA samples today. They will use the samples to identify new genes that increase a person's risk factor for developing psoriasis, and examine the connection between psoriasis and other [autoimmune diseases](#), such as Crohn's disease, [rheumatoid arthritis](#) and [lupus](#). Additional BioBank DNA samples will be given to Elder in the coming months.

"It's also very important that the diagnosis of psoriasis is definite, especially when it comes to psoriatic arthritis. The Biobank patients have all been carefully examined by dermatologists and rheumatologists, and provide an outstanding clinical resource," Elder adds.

The National Psoriasis Victor Henschel BioBank is a collection of DNA samples and clinical information used by scientists to advance the field of psoriasis genetics. Once completed, it will be the largest single collection of psoriasis DNA samples in the world.

"The BioBank is a critical resource for bringing us one step closer to a cure for psoriasis, and we are honored to partner with Dr. Elder and his team on this landmark project," says Rick Seiden, chair of the National Psoriasis Foundation Board of Trustees. "This endeavor would not be possible without the hundreds of people with and without psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis who donated DNA over the past four years, and we thank all of them for their huge contribution to psoriasis research."

More information: To learn more about the BioBank, visit www.psoriasis.org/biobank

Provided by University of Michigan Health System

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