



FEISTY SIDE OF 50
PLEA TO STOP FIGHT
AGAINST AGEING **FAMILY, D1**

ARANUI ART
STUDENTS EXCEL AT
THEATRE FESTIVAL **A3**



Swab predicts risk of cancer

Rebecca Palmer

Smokers can now take a test to predict their individual risk of getting lung cancer, using world-first technology developed by Kiwi researchers.

The gene-based mouth swab – which will cost current and former smokers \$275 – was developed from research conducted by Associate Professor Robert Young and his Auckland University colleagues.

But smokers who find themselves at the lower end of the risk scale have been warned they should not see it as an excuse “to happily go on smoking”.

Young said yesterday the test, which goes by the trade name Respiragene, combined clinical risk factors – such as age, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and family history of lung cancer – with DNA obtained through mouth swabs.

All smokers faced an increased risk of developing lung cancer but the risk was “much greater” for some than others, he said. Research suggested many smokers had an “optimistic bias”, believing bad outcomes happened to other people rather than themselves. “The majority of smokers do not think they are at risk of lung cancer.”

The test would help doctors to overcome that belief, he said. Identifying high-risk patients early on could lead to earlier cancer detection.

The test groups smokers and past smokers into moderate, high and very-high risk groups.

“There is no such thing as low risk,” Young said. “Everybody should quit.”

It was not recommended for non-smokers, whose risk was “very low”. But the researchers were investigating whether it would be useful for those exposed to passive smoke.

Smokers wanting to take the test could call an 0800 number to discuss how to obtain it.

They were asked to get their GPs to sign a request form and could be sent the swab test by mail.

Young and his colleagues will present the test to GPs at a conference in Rotorua this week.

The test was developed by Synergex Bioscience Ltd, a company spinoff from Auckland University. Results will be



Alan Conlon

Test reveals high risk

After more than 30 years of smoking, Alan Conlon had his “fingers crossed” that he would not get lung cancer.

But the gene-based “Respiragene” test developed by Auckland University researchers has identified him as “very high risk”. Conlon took the test last year as part of the research.

His gene test was followed up with a CT scan that revealed a suspicious nodule on his lungs. Fortunately, a follow-up scan three months later found it had not changed – but Conlon intends to keep up regular testing. He has given up smoking.

“They [the researchers] effectively saved my life...” Conlon, 67, hoped to live to 100.

processed in Auckland by another university spinoff, DNA Diagnostics Ltd.

Synergex’s test was the first in the world to combine genetic testing with clinical variables to establish relative lung cancer risk.

“Our test is really a one-off test in the sense that your genes are your genes and they define your predisposition.”

Respiratory physician Peter Martin, medical adviser to the Quit Group, said the technology had significant applications.

But he warned its purpose was not to identify smokers who could “happily go on smoking”.

Even those found to have a moderate risk were at least 20 times as likely as non-smokers to develop lung cancer. **Fairfax**

» Cigarette war A4

40 boomerangs go walkabout



Will they come back? Cassienne Krenek with one of the boomerangs that were stolen.

Photo: KIRK HARGREAVES

Theft really throws competitor

Keith Lynch

It’s been several days but Cassienne Krenek is still waiting for her boomerangs to come back.

About 40 boomerangs were stolen from Krenek’s car, which was parked near Waltham Park

in Christchurch, early on Saturday.

The car was left on Domett St.

“I’ve been collecting them for a long time,” said Krenek, 27, a competitive boomerang thrower.

“Some were given to me by

boomerang throwers and some I made myself.

“They’re really, really special because I’ve had them so long.”

Krenek, who competed at the Boomerang World Championships in Christchurch in 1996, returned to her car about 3am on Saturday to discover the

theft. She later spoke to residents and they recalled seeing boomerangs lying in the park.

“I think the people who stole them would have just thrown them and left them in the park,” she said.

“I think what happened is people picked them up in the

park in the morning,” she said.

“I really think a lot of people would have just picked them up thinking someone’s lost a boomerang.”

Krenek, an English teacher, hopes to compete at the Boomerang World Championships in Rome in 2010.

Parents lucky in more ways than one

A Wellington couple are celebrating a double windfall after collecting a \$250,000 Lotto prize on their way to the hospital to become parents of a baby girl.

The pair dashed to collect their prize from Lotto’s Wellington office yesterday morning.

But the rush was more about getting to Hutt Hospital on time to prepare for the birth of their second child, than about counting their money.

The proud father, speaking from his wife’s hospital room, said that not even winning Lotto compared to being a father for the second time in two years.

“I’m just stoked that everything went fine and the baby’s come out healthy. That’s the best you could hope for.”

The couple, who did not want to reveal their identity,

found out they had shared division one with four others on Sunday, and were told by a Lotto worker it was more fun to claim the prize in person.

“We thought it would be a bit of a novelty. It probably only happens once in your life, unless you’re really lucky.”

“The rest of this week’s probably going to be really tied up so hit it while the opportunity’s there,” the father said.

Lotto spokeswoman Kate Richards said the couple were in such a hurry they practically dropped the ticket, signed for their winnings, and ran.

“This is one out of the box. It’s definitely got everybody talking.”

“We all get a warm fuzzy feeling that it’s going to a nice couple that are going to use the



Double blessing: This little girl was born on the day her parents, who do not wish to be identified, won a \$250,000 Lotto prize. Photo: FAIRFAX

money and really appreciate their win. This is not a day they’re ever going to forget.”

The baby girl, weighing 3.5kg, arrived by elective caesarean section yesterday.

The day before, all the father could think of was his daughter’s birth when he received a call from his excited wife.

“I thought someone might have run into my car or something. She said, ‘No, no, it’s good news.’”

“I suppose if it was a million you’d be jumping around... but it’s still a really nice surprise. It’s going to be real helpful. It still hasn’t sunk in properly.”

The couple planned to pay off a good chunk of their mortgage, do some home renovations, take a family trip to Australia and put the rest in the bank.

“We’re just trying to get our head around having the baby,” he said.

“It [winning Lotto] happens when you least expect it but it couldn’t have come at a better time.” **Fairfax**

Govt to control water reform

Paul Gorman Auckland

The Government plans to take charge of water management until it is satisfied it is in the right hands.

“Water is so strategically important that central Government has to... provide more direction,” Environment Minister Nick Smith told an environmental summit in Auckland last night.

Water management reforms would be led by the Land and Water Forum, involving major water users in agriculture, industry and power generation, as well as environmental and recreational groups.

The reforms have been supported by the Greens.

Co-leader Russel Norman said he had supported the process because something had to be done about water issues.

Environment Canterbury chief executive Bryan Jenkins said he was encouraged by greater leadership from central Government.

“We don’t have a problem with Government leadership – some things are best done at national, regional and catchment levels.”

Deteriorating water quality and poor incentives for water allocation and storage were the catalysts for the reforms.

Smith told The Press it was time to investigate whether regional councils were the right agencies “at the right level” to make crucial water management decisions.

“Central Government has today said that we aren’t going to leave all this to regional government,” he said.

“It’s likely that this process will result in reforms to the (Resource Management) Act and provide new tools for bodies like Environment Canterbury to use in better managing water.”

At the end of the reform process over the next year, the Government would seek input from the public and iwi before making any policy decisions, Smith said.

“The Government doesn’t underestimate the challenges that are there,” he said.

In his speech to the Environment Defence Society summit, Smith said he wanted New Zealand to get the “best value” from its water resources.

That “best value” needed to be determined by considering economic, environmental, social and cultural dimensions, and by weighing up individual, local and national interests.

“We need to move away from our current first-in, first-served system to a system that is focused on getting the most value, in a broad sense, from the use of our water.”

“The problem is that our system of management has not kept up with the extra pressure on our water system.”

TO SUBSCRIBE
 PH 0800 THE PRESS
 AIR FREIGHT EXTRA 50¢



Special Offers
 June 2009

Citroën C4 Driveaway Deals

Citroën C4:
 1.6 Automatic Petrol.
 From \$29,990
 2.0 SX.
 From \$34,990

Plus... 0% Interest - 50/50 Deal*

Citroën C5 Driveaway Deals

Citroën C5:
 Sedan - 2.0 HDi Diesel Turbo.
 From \$56,990
 Tourer - 2.0 HDi Diesel Turbo
 From \$59,990

Limited Offer.

EUROMARQUE
 Motor Vehicles of Distinction

AH: Phone Ben 021-337-771 or Paul 0275-360-868
 SEARCH NOW @ www.euromarque.co.nz

Cnr Durham & St Asaph Streets, Christchurch
 Ph 0800 888 100 or 03 366 0229

*1/2 Deposit & a doc fee of \$378 required on delivery, final 1/2 payment required 12 months after delivery. Normal lending & credit criteria apply. Offer not available in conjunction with other offer.