

Busselton Health Study joins forces with US study

RESEARCHERS from the Busselton Health Study are about to link up with the Framingham Heart Study — a US study run by the American National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute since 1948.

The move is tipped to create new breakthroughs in tackling heart disease by combining information gathered from the Busselton study, which was started in 1966 by Dr Kevin Cullen, with that from the equally famous US study.

Professor Lyle Palmer from the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR) and the Busselton Population Medical Research Foundation said the move was likely to lead to important discoveries.

"Both of these studies have generated very important breakthroughs that have impacted on the health of millions of people — so combining them will be very powerful indeed," he said.

"By bringing together the health, DNA and lifestyle information of these critical resources, we will have an improved capacity to unlock the genetic and environmental causes of heart disease, which is one of our biggest killers."

Professor Palmer said while progress had been made in determining some of the lifestyle and genetic factors affecting cardiovascular disease, it continued to be the greatest health issue facing Australians.

Cardiologist Associate Professor Joe Hung from Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and the Busselton Population Medical Research Foundation said that heart disease killed more people in Australia than any other disease.

"It also causes a phenomenal amount of sickness, reduced quality of life and disability," he said.

"The situation is of course similar in the United States where it is the leading cause of death and serious illness, so it's clear these sorts of projects have the potential to save many lives."



Breakthrough: Professor Lyle Palmer from the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research is pleased about a collaboration between the Busselton Health Study and the US-based Framingham Heart Study.