

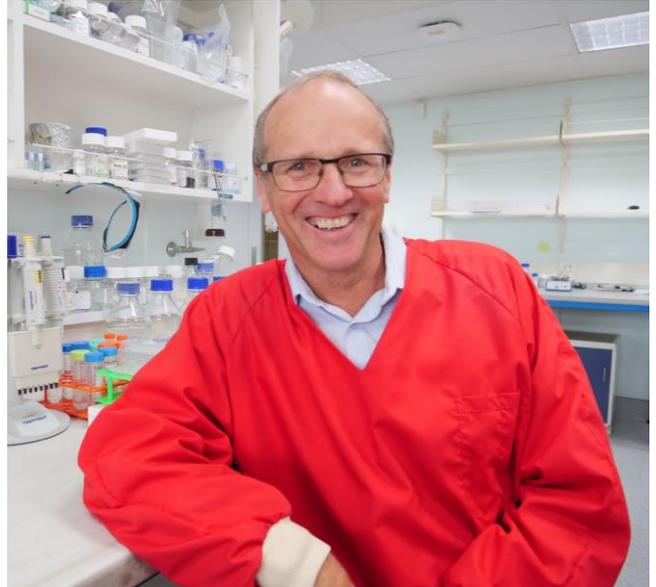
Professor Martin A. Kennedy

Genetics researcher, University of Otago & Co-lead Investigator, Eating Disorders Genetics Initiative, NZ, CHRISTCHURCH

Professor Martin Kennedy is a genetics researcher in the Department of Pathology and Biomedical Science at the University of Otago, Christchurch, and Co-lead Investigator for the New Zealand arm of the Eating Disorders Genetics Initiative (EDGI) – the world's largest and most rigorous investigation into eating disorders ever performed.

Prof Kennedy has extensive interest in using genetics to improve the understanding and treatment of many disorders.

He obtained a BSc (Hons) in Microbiology at the University of Canterbury in 1981, and a PhD in bacterial genetics at the University of Auckland in 1986. He next undertook postdoctoral work in leukaemia genetics at the Cytogenetics Unit of Christchurch Hospital and the Laboratory of Molecular Biology, Cambridge, UK.



Prof Kennedy returned to Christchurch in 1991 to join the University of Otago, Christchurch, where he has remained ever since.

Over the years Prof Kennedy has performed extensive research in psychiatric genetics and other complex traits, including clinical depression, addictions, and inflammatory bowel disease. He has also researched genetic factors that influence an individual's response to various medications, as well as the risk of adverse drug reactions, known as pharmacogenomics.

Genome technology has advanced to the point where it is now possible to find genes underlying most disorders, and to use this knowledge to improve understanding of the condition, and ultimately, to better manage and treat it. It is for this reason that Prof Kennedy is delighted to be involved in the EDGI study.

"Demystifying the biology which causes such a misunderstood and tragic illness is a very worthy goal.

"I am proud to be part of EDGI and genuinely believe we can make a difference through our collective efforts," said Prof Kennedy.

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MEDIA CONTACTS: **Kirsten Bruce & Mel Kheradi, VIVA! Communications**
M 021 279 0816 | +61 401 717 566 | **M** +61 421 551 257
E kirstenbruce@vivacommunications.com.au
mel@vivacommunications.com.au