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Major breast cancer research funding for Birmingham

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Breast Cancer Campaign has awarded a research grant worth almost £200,000 to Dr Jo Morris at the University of Birmingham which could improve the lives of women at high risk of breast cancer.

The grant, part of more than £1.5 million awarded by the charity for research so far this year, will provide key information that could lead to a test which could predict which of these women will develop breast cancer as a result of inheriting faulty genes.

Thanks to advances made possible by research, we know that women who have defective genes called BRCA1 or 2 are at high risk of developing breast cancer, but unfortunately current tests can't definitively identify which of them will develop the disease. This means doctors can only provide advice on ways people can reduce their risk; leading a healthy lifestyle, receiving regular screening to catch cancer early or even having a mastectomy as a preventative measure.

Dr Morris hopes her research into how BRCA1 is controlled will provide vital clues about which faults in this gene cause cancer; information that could lead to more accurate BRCA genetic testing.

Dr Morris said, "I am grateful to Breast Cancer Campaign for supporting this important research. I hope my findings will pave the way for a gene test that can help women who at the moment have to make difficult decisions about their treatment options and alleviate the uncertainty they face."

Arlene Wilkie, Director of Research and Policy, Breast Cancer Campaign said, "With as many as 4,600 people testing positive as carriers of faulty BRCA1 or 2 genes each year in the UK, there is a real need to be able to provide these patients with definitive results as to whether or not they will develop breast cancer. This is why it is vital that we continue to fund research, like Dr Morris', so we can remove the fear people currently experience of not knowing what the future holds and allow them to make more informed choices about their health."

Notes to editors

• Breast Cancer Campaign aims to beat breast cancer by funding innovative world-class research to understand how breast cancer develops, leading to improved diagnosis, treatment, prevention and cure
• The charity currently funds 105 projects worth over £16.2 million in 38 locations across the UK and Ireland
• Breast cancer is the most common cancer in the UK and accounts for nearly one in three of all cancers in women
• In the UK, nearly 46,000 new cases of breast cancer are diagnosed each year - that's 125 a day
• Visit **www.breastcancercampaign.org (http://www.breastcancercampaign.org/)**

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The University contributes £662 million to the City of Birmingham and £779 million to the West Midlands region, with an annual income of more than £388.6 million.

For further information:
Kate Chapple, Press Office, University of Birmingham, tel 0121 414 2772 or 07789 921164

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