

Under the Microscope with Professor Simon Mallal

Research into HIV has been boosted after Professor Simon Mallal Executive Director of the Centre for Clinical Immunology and Biomedical Statistics and his team received a grant of US\$9.8 million from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The joint venture between Royal Perth Hospital and Murdoch University has been closely analysing HIV and how it morphs itself differently in each individual.

Dr Mallal's team conducted a study of Perth people infected with the virus two years ago and from his results discovered that every person has a different form of the virus and it tailors itself to an individuals immune response.

Over 42 million people are infected with the virus worldwide and Dr Mallal said that the Gates Foundation grant will make it possible to create databases relating the genetics of the virus and people in key populations around the world.

“Our new study will test 1750 people worldwide and we will continue to assist groups around the world to design more effective, suitable vaccines,” Dr Mallal said.

Murdoch University Senior Clinical Research Fellow Dr Mina John said that HIV is a complex virus that cannot be solved simply and improved technology is needed to assist in the research.

The team will now study how the virus changes in people from Africa, the United States, South America, the Caribbean, Asia and Europe.