



Gene genius at work

BREAST cancer patients in WA are helping global researchers unlock the potential of their genetic discoveries more quickly via a Perth biotechnology company.

The pilot study will use cutting-edge, cell-based imaging equipment to analyse tissue from more than 500 breast cancer patients whose samples form part of the WA Research Tissue Network.

The project is a joint

initiative between BioPharmica subsidiary, Molecular Discovery Systems (MDS), and GE Healthcare.

The agreement was announced at the Western Australian Institute of Medical Research (WAIMR) in Nedlands.

GE's "In Cell Analyzer" imaging technology enables scientists to see what is happening around genes, which helps determine if the gene will be useful for

new tests or treatments for cancer and diabetes.

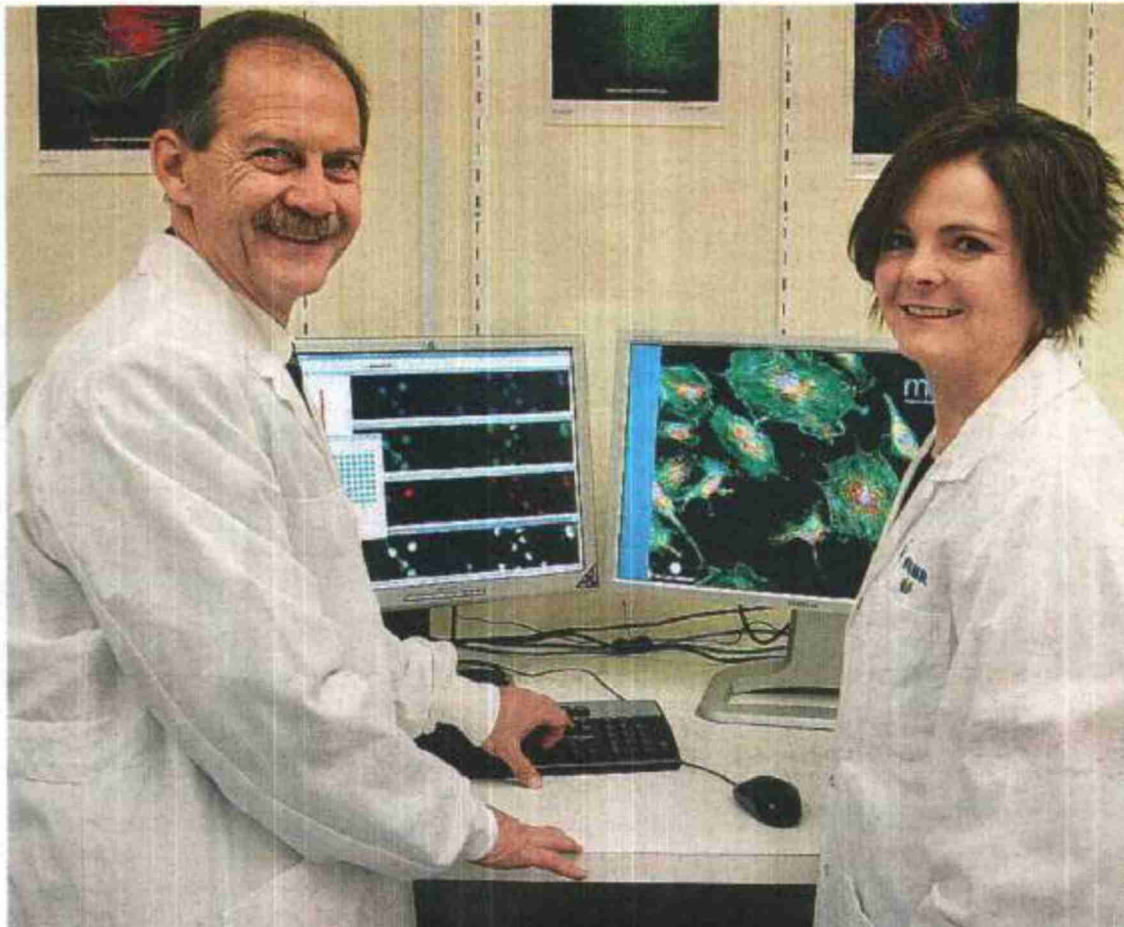
MDS CEO Dr Sam Gallagher said researchers could also learn more about disease mechanisms through the technology.

"Before this type of equipment became available we could not see what was happening around the gene – it was like a black box. So being able to watch what's going on in real time can help us better understand how the disease operates," she said.

The technology can speed up drug screening, which allows new treatments to get from laboratories to patients' bedsides more quickly.

WAIMR director Prof Peter Klinken said partnerships of this kind were only possible because WA had attracted some of the world's top scientists.

HLS5, a gene discovered by Prof Klinken and his team, will be the first gene to be investigated in the study.



WAIMR director Professor Peter Klinken with breast cancer survivor Cassandra Stipanicev