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# Melanoma research

By LAUREN PEDEN

NEDLANDS resident and research scientist Robin Scaife will spearhead a project to make chemotherapy drugs more powerful and effective in treating melanoma.

The project, which recently secured \$75,000 in funding from the Scott Kirkbride Melanoma Research Centre, will see researchers explore ways to improve available drugs.

Dr Scaife, who is based at WA Institute for Medical Research, said melanomas were difficult to treat because they often responded poorly to chemotherapy.

"Recent investigations looking at cell division have, however, brought to light potential new strategies to target chemo resistant cancerous cells, opening up the possibility using current chemotherapy drugs with more success," he said.



**Dr Robin Scaife in his lab at the WA Institute for Medical Research.** Picture: Andrew Ritchie

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"By further exploiting the sensitivity of cancerous cells when they undergo division, we intend to hit melanoma cells where it hurts the most."

He said the immediate effect of the research would be minimal because the study would take time to develop new drugs.

"The actual research component and testing of drugs will not take that long. The process of developing the drugs used in clinics will take a long time because we have to go through animal testing and then progress to the initial phase of clinical trials and that takes a few years," he said.