

Canterbury

District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora o Waitaha

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MEDIA RELEASE

TO: News Room

FROM: Amy Milne, Media Advisor

DATE:

SUBJECT:

A Canterbury Biochemistry Scientist's study on Cystic Fibrosis in Adulthood – an evolving spectrum disorder, is to be published next month.

Sandy Woods' scientific paper has just been accepted for publication in the NZ Journal of Medical Laboratory Science and will be appearing in the April issue.

Sandy is a Medical Laboratory Scientist in Specialist Biochemistry for Canterbury Health Laboratories and says she chose to study Cystic Fibrosis in adulthood after increasingly noticing more adults being tested for it in her job.

“Up until about 2005 this testing was mainly performed on children and babies. Noticing steady increases in the number of adult appointments for sweat tests, I was curious to know, that if we were testing so many adults, what we were finding? And hence the idea for the study developed.”

With more adults being diagnosed with the condition, it reflects an increased awareness of what has become termed “atypical cystic fibrosis”.

“Therefore the diagnosis may not be as black and white as originally thought, with increasing recognition that these atypical cases exist.”

In Sandy's study she reviewed adult cases investigated through Canterbury Health Laboratories over the last 15 years with clinical suspicion of Cystic Fibrosis.

“It was evident that there were many cases with atypical Cystic Fibrosis and what was previously considered to be a defined diagnosis is clearly an evolving spectrum disorder. The clinical index of suspicion is also clearly shifting and with the expectation that more cases of atypical Cystic Fibrosis will be recognised.”

The oldest patients Sandy found in her study with atypical Cystic Fibrosis was 79 years of age.

“One of the most common and heartening things that adult patients whom I have met, say to me is that they are just grateful to finally have an answer to chronic illness that has previously gone undiagnosed.”

Sandy's scientific paper is due to be published in the NZIMLS Journal in the April issue 2013. It is entitled: Cystic Fibrosis in Adulthood – an evolving spectrum disorder.

Sandy first started training as a medical laboratory assistant at Christchurch Hospital Laboratory in 1988. She qualified in 1994 in Clinical Biochemistry with a Diploma of Medical Laboratory Technology.

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