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Help for fragile X victims

Lucie van den Berg

medical reporter

A WORLD first test will give thousands of families affected by fragile X syndrome the chance of earlier detection and intervention.

The Murdoch Children's Research Institute breakthrough could allow newborn screening of the world's most common cause of inherited developmental disability.

A DNA test would allow doctors to detect the type and severity of symptoms much earlier.

It can take doctors until a child turns three to diagnose the condition.

Lead researcher Dr David Godler said the discovery could pave the way for a simple, accurate and inexpensive test for FXS.

Fragile X Association of Australia president John Kelleher said the test could help sufferers and their families with better treatment and improved outcomes.

The genetic disorder is caused by a faulty switch in a gene called FMR1, which is on the X chromosome.

It is estimated that one in 130 females and one in 180 males carry the gene.

Each week in Australia one child is born who is fully affected with FXS.