

Dan l-artiklu huwa disponibbli anke bil-Malti (<https://www.tvm.com.mt/mt/news/tfal-maltin-u-taljana-fricerka-ghal-studju-dwar-il-kundizzjoni-coeliac/>)



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Primary schoolchildren to be tested for coeliac condition

Posted On January 30, 2019 - Updated 31 January, 2019 12:17pm

Report: Melvic Zammit

About 20,000 children between the ages of four and eleven years are to be examined as part of a study into strengthening the diagnosis process for the Coeliac condition among children. The project has come about as the result of cooperation between the Maltese and Sicilian health authorities on an investment of €2 million.

About 1,400 persons in Malta suffer from this condition where the intestines react when wheat products are consumed.

The science community has agreed there is a need for the improvement of the diagnosis process of this condition from an early age. For this purpose Maltese and Sicilian authorities have combined forces for children to be tested in the two islands.

The Clinical Director at the Pathology Department at Mater Dei Hospital, Christopher Barbara, said that in the coming months tests will be carried out on 20,000 children in Maltese Primary Schools and 2,000 children in Sicily.

Dr Barbara said a database will be established and through computerisation and artificial intelligence it will be seen whether in future it will be possible to avoid using endoscopy which is an invasive method so that children will avoid this process and enable diagnosis without endoscopy being used.

Barbara said that research shows that the incidence of the Coeliac condition in Maltese and Sicilians is high when compared with other countries.

He said this is a strong Mediterranean condition particularly in our region and therefore early detection is needed to set the appropriate diet for persons whose symptoms have not already been apparent.

Chief Government Doctor, Dennis Vella Baldacchino, said the test to be carried out on children is a simple one to take and will only be a finger blood sample taken with the permission of parents.

If the results are valid they will be an innovation which is the scope of this testing project and will benefit the community because the test does not have to be carried out in hospitals.

The Minister for Education, Evarist Bartolo, described the project as an interesting one that will lead to research that will lead to early detection of the condition and therefore early treatment.

The Parliamentary Secretary for European Funds, Aaron Farrugia, said the project ITAMA will cost over €2 million and will be financed by the Inter-regional Programme Italia-Malta.



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