

## Prostate research finds genetic signals

GENETIC markers that will help identify men likely to get prostate cancer have been found in an international study.

The discovery of the gene sequences on seven chromosomes is seen as a step towards better diagnosis and treatment of the most common cancer in men in developed countries.

However, the Menzies Research Institute in Hobart, which collaborated on the study, warns there are likely to be dozens, if not hundreds, of gene mutations that leave men susceptible to prostate cancer. "What we've actually found to most people's horror is that there are a very large number of rocks building this particular mountain," said the institute's director, Simon Foote.

Each year in Australia, about 20,000 cases of prostate cancer are diagnosed and 3300 men die of the disease. Diagnosis usually relies on a combination of a prostate specific antigen (PSA) pathology test, a digital rectal examination and a biopsy.

Professor Foote said that unlike diseases such as cystic fibrosis, where a single gene was the culprit, prostate cancer was among a group of diseases that had complex genetics.

The study of 40,000 men - led by British researcher Rosalind Eeles and including work by the Menzies Institute's Joanne Dickinson and John Hopper from Melbourne University - was published in *Nature Genetics*.

The connections between the genes, Professor Foote said, was "like a railway network with genes as stations along the line. Similar genes along the same pathway [are] involved in prostate cancer."

In five to 10 years, he said, it would be possible to use genetic information to predict susceptibility to prostate cancer.

# Torch lighting practice goes smoothly in Greece

*OLYMPIA, Greece — Planning hiccups are part of an Olympic Games, so it was in Ancient Olympia that everyone held their breath Wednesday when a practice lighting of the 2010 Olympic flame didn't seem to be working.*

But when the parabolic mirror finally set the torch alight, the look on the face of the actress playing the high priestess was one mirrored on the faces of Vancouver Olympic officials.

It was a look that said yes, this is finally beginning.

Thursday's lighting of the Olympic flame kicks off a seven-day relay in Greece before the torch travels to Victoria, B.C., to begin the longest domestic relay in Olympic history, concluding in Vancouver on Feb. 12, 2010 to start the Games.

It's a relay filled with logistical challenges and making sure the flame gets lit is only one.

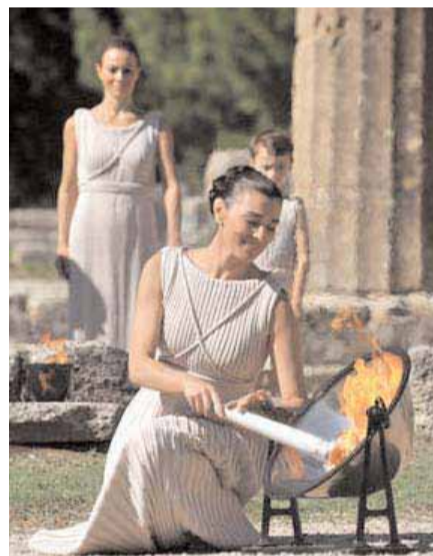
But the sun was in Vancouver's favour Wednesday and the flame that was lit during the practice run will serve as a back-up in case rain clouds Thursday's formal event.

Bad weather disrupted the ceremony for the 2000 Sydney Summer Games, and the past three Winter Olympics — in Turin in 2006, Salt Lake City in 2002 and Nagano in 1998.

It's an hour long program heavy on symbolism that will also include speeches by International Olympic Committee President Jacques Rogge and the head of Vancouver's organizing committee.

Wednesday's rehearsal featured 21 actresses playing the role of ancient Greek priestesses who pray to the God Apollo to light the flame that will spread the message of the Games to the world.

The ceremony's choreographer, Artemis Ignatiou, said the performance was based around a piece of art



she saw in the Olympic museum, but that she also wanted to send a message. "We have to make Olympic Games, not war," she said, the make-up from the rehearsal beginning to melt under a scorching mid-day Greek sun.

The first torchbearer, his face glowing with pride and sweat, wore the full 2010 Olympic uniform of red mittens, tracksuit and toque even as the temperature neared 30 degrees.

"It is a big honour for me to be here," said Vassilis Dimitriadis, a Greek skier who has competed at three past Olympics and will compete in Vancouver.

It took an old fire to create a new way to celebrate the flame for the 2010 Winter Olympics.

The flame for the Vancouver Games will be lit, as always, in the ancient temples of Olympia, the birthplace of what would eventually become the modern Games.

But a fire two years ago that ravaged a grove of trees that used to host the celebration around the lighting of the Winter Olympic flame has seen the cultural part of the ceremony moved to the ancient stadium grounds, usually reserved for Summer Olympic events.

Vancouver organizers were

thrilled the move could add another first to their torch relay.

"I can't wait to see the Greek nation get behind this relay and for a week later to go to Canada to see the same power and energy," said Jim Richards, director of torch relays for the organizing committee.

Lucky tourists who happened upon the rehearsal applauded when it was finished, some using cell-phones to send snapped photos to family and friends.

One family said they were supposed to have been in Olympia on Tuesday but took a wrong turn, only to arrive Wednesday to witness the experience of a lifetime.

A British couple said they'd be sure to tell their sister that the relay had begun.

She lives in Toronto, they said, and they didn't think she even knew it was starting or much about the Games.

That's part of the goal of the relay, said Terry Wright, a vice-president with the Vancouver organizing committee.

"The flame itself is such a powerful symbol and people relate to it and they get excited about it and they know that just around the corner, they'll see Canada's best on the ice and the field of play," he said.



## CELEBRITIES TURN OUT IN FORCE FOR PLAY GOLF DAY

Some of Australia's biggest names in entertainment have stepped out on course as the newly unveiled ambassadors of PlayGolf.com.au

Shannon Noll, Andy Lee, Sarah Wilson, Tony Squires, James Mathison, Liz Ellis, Shelly Horton and Kerri-Anne Kennerley are among a growing list of famous faces who have signed up to be ambassadors. Television doyenne Kennerley was joined by fellow TV personalities James Mathison, Sarah Wilson, Deborah Hutton, Tony Squires, retired pro Lucas Parsons plus rocker Shannon Noll for 18 holes at New South Wales Golf Club — home of the 2009 Australian Open. The celebrities have signed on as official ambassadors for PlayGolf.com.au — an exciting new initiative from Golf Australia aimed at increasing participation in what is known by many as the sport of kings. The website, [www.playgolf.com.au](http://www.playgolf.com.au), aims to encourage more Australians to take up the game, providing information for beginners on where to get lessons or head to for a casual round.