



EDITORIAL

MALTESE ORIGINS

Some research can change how a society perceives itself. Such discoveries do not happen often. Over the last few years DNA samples from hundreds of Maltese people have been sequenced. The data has set in stone the origin of the Maltese people. Read about it in the first article (pg. 19) of our focus on The Maltese Genome.

The other focus articles talk about genes for health. A University of Malta team found a novel mutation in local families connected to the blood disorder thalassaemia (pg. 26), which can lead to death in the worst cases. The researchers are trying to determine how to use this knowledge in patients suffering from the condition. Other work focuses on heart disease (pg. 32). Malta has one of the highest rates of heart attack-related deaths in Europe. A Maltese study is trying to determine which gene alterations common in Malta increase risk. Knowledge is power for treatment.

Marijuana is a controversial drug. Research worldwide, including in Malta, has shown that it can potentially treat several conditions, explains Prof. Giuseppe Di Giovanni (pg. 38). Malta has double the EU average of early school leavers. Cassi Camilleri writes about local research seeking solutions to this problem that is destroying communities (pg. 52).

Marie Claire Gatt talks about sea birds around the Maltese Islands (pg. 44). These are vital for the Mediterranean Sea's health. She reports on research performed to see which areas are in dire need of protection.

In this issue, students talk about digital art (pg. 16) and testing octopi for heavy metal levels (pg. 15). While alumni discuss their work building security apps. The fun section rounds up the issue with reviews, fun science questions, and a 100 word idea to change Malta (pg. 67-71).

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