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New genetic group 'could be at risk from vCJD'

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SCIENTISTS have identified a new strain of variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) that could affect people previously thought not to be at risk, it has been reported.

In Britain, 164 people have died from vCJD, which originally came from cows infected with BSE and was first diagnosed in the 1990s. All victims shared a certain gene make-up that is common to 40 per cent of the population.

Last night, it emerged that the first diagnosis had been made in a person who has a different genetic sequence.

Professor Chris Higgins, who chairs the government's spongiform encephalopathy advisory committee, said the discovery meant a much larger number of people were potentially at risk.

However, confirmation can only be made through extremely aggressive procedures such as brain biopsies.

The Department of Health monitors vCJD cases through the National CJD Surveillance Unit in Edinburgh. Blood tests to identify vCJD are undergoing clinical trials and could be available within 18 months.

Campaigners have been calling on the government to speed up blood screening tests and make public reports that may identify who was responsible for the whole BSE fiasco.

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An advertisement banner for eMule. On the left is the eMule logo, which consists of a blue circle with a white 'e' and the word 'Mule' in a stylized, blue, italicized font. To the right of the logo, the text "est simple, est rapide, est gratuit !" is written in a black, sans-serif font. Further right is a green button with a white download icon and the text "TÉLÉCHARGER ICI". Below this button is a smaller blue button with the text "NO SPYWARE". On the far right of the banner is a cartoon rabbit character wearing sunglasses and a white shirt.

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est rapide,
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