

NEWSLETTER

June 2007 / ISSUE 01

Welcome to the first issue of North East and Cumbria Diabetes Research Network NEWS. We will aim to produce a newsletter three times a year; providing regular updates on the network, training and events and giving information about trials running on the network and funding opportunities.

INTRODUCTION



As the many changes outlined in the national research paper “Best research for Best Health” fall into place, research teams across the North East and Cumbria are well placed to take advantage the many opportunities that the new networks will provide. We are particularly fortunate in being able to capitalise on the synergies provided by having excellent working relationships with other local topic networks – notably Primary Care, Stroke and the well established Cancer network, whose experience we can draw on.

The links between network performance and support of science funding, and between network support and success in the awarding of grants by all the major funding bodies is becoming clearer. Support for research related training, and with bureaucracy associated with research approvals, and help with publicity for new studies should all help ensure that studies open in a timely manner and recruit to target efficiently.

There are now more funding opportunities open to researchers than ever before. However, the process of research project development and grant application is linked to the national Diabetes Research Network (DRN) agenda, and patients, clinicians and researchers from this region have the opportunity to ensure we are well represented in these processes.

It has taken a while to assemble the network team but we are beginning to see evidence of real progress. Our first research nurses are now in place with the clinical research teams around the region, and we intend to add to these in due course. The process of staff appointment has been slow due to the NHS recruitment strategy and employment law, however, all networks have experienced similar difficulties.

The network is centrally managed, accountable both to the national coordinating centre and to the Department of Health via UKCRN. Performance will be tightly monitored, and reporting of all research related activity. We will have to show that we are making an impact; delivering training for staff and NHS professionals, increasing recruitment into trials, developing more projects and protocols and creating effective research collaborations.

Along with the other topic specific networks, we are developing a training programme to support clinical and research teams across the region. A Training Needs Analysis will soon be produced to enable us ensure that staff have access to essential training, especially to up-to date accredited GCP and EU Directive training. Please watch the website, speak to your local network lead or call/email us direct.

Beyond patient recruitment numbers we also seek to widen the research potential of the region bringing in previously research naive centres through adequate training and support. The consolidation of patient registers, and patient consent for access to clinical records for research purposes will also contribute to research infrastructure. We aim to promote the widest possible participation in the network. The network steering committee will be the main arena for influencing priorities, and accessing support or advice. If you wish to raise specific issues or propose ideas please contact any of the team.

Contact Details North East & Cumbria Diabetes Research Network
Clinical Research Facility, 4th Floor Leazes Wing, Royal Victoria Infirmary
Queen Victoria Road Newcastle on Tyne NE1 4LP
Tel: 0191 282 0096 Fax: 0191 246 4668 web site : http://www.ukdrn.org/lrn_nec.html

E mail: drn.ac.uk

North East Diabetes Research Network Launch

Over a hundred people attended the public launch on 22 March 2007 at St James' Park in Newcastle. The conference brought together diabetes researchers, health care professionals, patients and carers and representatives from industry to hear about the aims and potential of the network. A number of representatives from diabetes UK, and the voluntary sector locally were particularly appreciated. We were also delighted to welcome back Professor Des Johnson (National DRN Director) and Professor Sue Roberts (National Clinical lead for Diabetes) both of whom have lived and worked in the region. The joining together of such a lively and interested diabetes community provided a reminder of the sound, collaborative basis for our local network - and the local patients present promised to hold us to our promise to keep them at the centre of our work. The network is establishing a patient-carers group that will advise researchers at all stages of research and interested parties are invited to contact the network. Following positive feedback from delegates present at the launch we will be hosting a similar event on an annual basis.

Network Staff

The network office, which is based at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Newcastle, employs a number of dedicated research support staff based in hospital trusts across the region to deliver a portfolio of research. There is funding for one whole time equivalent clinical trials officer / research nurse per geographical area, an administrative officer and a network manager. The steering group comprises the network clinical leads plus the Director of the Primary Care Network in the North East, and will also have patient representation once fully constituted. The Clinical leads for the network are: Professor Mark Walker: Network Director, Professor Sally Marshall: Clinical Lead for Newcastle Dr Jola Weaver: Clinical lead for Gateshead Dr Stewart Sawers: Clinical Lead for Cumbria Dr Rudy Billous: Clinical Lead for North and South Tees Dr Alan McCulloch: Clinical Lead for Durham and Darlington Dr John Chapman, Clinical Lead for Sunderland and South Tyneside and Dr Simon Eaton: Clinical Lead for Northumberland and North Tyneside. Please see the web site for details of how to contact any network personnel.

Network research portfolio

The UKCRN web site lists all adopted studies (currently 52 studies are listed) can be seen on the UKCRN web site, at <http://ukcrn.org.uk/> Studies so far adopted and running in the North East include The RISC study (looking at cardiovascular risk and progression to type 2 diabetes), Warren Progene (genetics of Type 2), ASCEND (fish oils and aspirin for prevention of cardiovascular complications) , and 4 commercial trials in various stages of development looking at: weight loss for those with impaired fasting blood glucose, a study of treatment during pregnancy, an immunotherapy trial for newly diagnosed type 1 diabetes patients and a study looking at insulin initiation in people over 75.

E mail: drn.ac.uk

ASCEND



A Study of Cardiovascular Events in Diabetes



Investigating the efficacy of aspirin and omega-3 fish oils in the primary prevention of cardiovascular disease in people with diabetes

ASCEND is a national study being coordinated by the Clinical Trial Service Unit of Oxford University, that has been adopted by both the UK Primary Care Research Network and the UK Diabetes Research Network.

We are aiming to recruit 10,000 patients nationwide to help us answer two important questions in the management of patients with diabetes who do not have a history of vascular disease:

Do the benefits of low-dose aspirin outweigh the risks?

Do omega-3 fish oils reduce the incidence of major vascular events?

Although the role of aspirin is well-established in the secondary prevention of vascular disease, at present there is insufficient evidence to confidently say whether or not the benefits of aspirin outweigh the potential risks in the primary prevention of vascular disease. ASCEND will have sufficient power to reliably answer this question.

Omega-3 fish oils are a safe treatment, and there is some evidence that they are effective in secondary prevention of coronary disease. However, they have not been properly tested in a primary prevention strategy, and ASCEND will be able to do this.

GPs can help recruit patients into this trial. If you are interested in doing so, we would ask you to electronically search your practice diabetes register for potentially eligible patients, and we will provide an 'invitation pack' to send to all such patients and the text of an invitation letter to go in the pack once printed on your practice headed paper.

We can offer £100 to all participating practices.

ASCEND UPDATE May 2007

Ascend has randomised over 1500 patients, we now have R&D approval PCT's in the North East and Cumbria Research Network area.

If you would like further information please call 0800 585323 and ask for Dr Louise Bowman

E mail: drn.ac.uk

UKCRN LRN Northern and Yorkshire A training Day for LRN Network Teams

Tuesday, 26th June 2007 10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.

Stadium of Light: Sunderland

The day will include workshops and presentations on:

- **Roles of the Individuals within the LRN Teams**
- **Funding Application Process and RM&G**
- **Update on NRES**
- **The Practicalities of Ethical Application**
- **Role of the Research Nurse in Obtaining Informed Consent**

The day's other focus is the opportunity for staff from all networks to meet

*Morning coffee and lunch will be provided.
Please register with the NYReN office*

To register for this event please complete and return this slip to:

**Northern and Yorkshire PCRN,
The Health Centre,
Sunningdale Drive,
Eaglescliffe,
Stockton on Tees,
TS16 9EA**

Tel: **01642 789026** Fax: **01642 789706**

email: [**enquiries@nyren.co.uk**](mailto:enquiries@nyren.co.uk)



Name

Address

Profession

Contact number

I wish to reserve **place (s)**

Post, Fax or email

A full list of both general research training, and Diabetes Network specific training can be accessed via the UKCRN web site www.ukcrn.org.uk , or via the diabetes network office