

North East London Diabetes Research Network



Newsletter

Issue 1
April 2008

Welcome to the first issue of the North East London Diabetes Research Network (NELDRN). We will continue to publish this newsletter 4 times per year with the aim to give an update of the work of the NELDRN including trials being undertaken and events held in the locality.

Introduction

The NELDRN team are based in Whitechapel East London and headed by Professor Graham Hitman. The team consists of network manager Gillian Hood supported by Jacqueline Fletcher the team's administrator. The NELDRN is unique in having a Primary Care coordinator Sarah Mills. There are four full time research nurses Malar Saravanan, Felicia Otobomartins, Zohra Rehman and Emma Thompson.

North East London Diabetes Research Network Launch

The NELDRN hosted its official launch on 20th November 2007 at the Great Hall St Bartholomew's Hospital. The event was well attended by local dignitaries, diabetologists, diabetes specialist nurses, GP's, Practice nurses and lay people with an interest in diabetes research. We were fortunate to have Professor Harry Keene CBE as our key note speaker who gave the audience an informative talk on the history of diabetes research. The launch gave the opportunity to introduce the network to the North East London professional and lay community and the team have received much positive feedback on the success of the event. We hope to host several smaller events throughout the locality to introduce the network to those who were unable to attend to increase the awareness of our work further.



Study portfolio update

1. DRN 051 ACTION LADA

This is a screening programme to identify people with Latent Auto-immune Diabetes of the Adult.

2. DRN 035 Epigenetic of Type 1 diabetes using identical twins

In identical twins, if one has diabetes, one third of the two twins will go on to develop T2 diabetes, the other two thirds do not. This study questions whether this results from genetics or environmental factors.

3. DRN 024 BIPOD: Bangladeshi initiative for the prevention of diabetes

This is the prevention study focussing on individual attitudes toward the prevention of diabetes amongst people in the Bangladeshi community. Speaking to both males and females across the spectrum including General practitioners, health Care workers, religious leaders and community workers.

4. DRN 013 BanglaDip: Diabetes prevention in people from Bangladeshi

This study is about a Pharma co-therapy intervention/prevention programme. Focussing on lifestyle including diet, exercise and metformin. This pilot research study aims to determine the right methods to test whether a similar prevention programme will be successful in an ethnic minority group, east London's Bangladeshi community, which is at high risk of diabetes. Participants are identified via general practice electronic medical records using a diabetes risk score based on routinely collected data. The pilot will test the feasibility of identification and recruitment of participants and all aspects of study design, data collection and intervention. The main outcome of the pilot will be a robust protocol for the full cost-effectiveness trial.

5. DRN 034 MEDEA: Does the Chronic disease self-management programme

A self empowerment programme based on Bandura's theory of self efficacy. Focussing on patients with T2 diabetes with the endpoint of causing a reduction in HBA1C. Recruitment for this study is now closed and most participants are the follow up stage.

6. DRN 034 POSEIDON: Promoting Collaborative Support & Education in Diabetes for Minority Ethnic Groups'

A joint pilot project between Newham University Hospital NHS Trust and University College London Medical School funded by the Department of Health and Newham Trust for two years. The present study aims to find out if people who go to story-sharing groups in their own language led by Bilingual Health Advocates get better control of their diabetes and other health improvements (such as losing weight, giving up smoking), compared to people who have standard nurse-led education sessions. Recruitment has now closed and currently follow-ups are in progress which are expected to end in October 2008.

7. DRN 064 Fish oil in diabetic pregnancy

This study being conducted at Newham University Hospital aims to see if supplementation with fish oils can correct membrane lipid abnormality in pregnant women with Type 1, Type 2 and gestational diabetes. This study is currently in the early stages of recruitment.

The DRN also undertakes various commercial studies relating to diabetes.

Lay Panel

Hi,

My name is Barbara Elster and I have the privilege of being the chairperson of the North East London Diabetes Research Network (NELDRN) Lay Panel
How did that happen?

Approximately 2-3 years ago Professor Graham Hitman invited me to be a member of the NELDRN steering group, explaining how diabetes research could affect us in North East London. As I was a member of a Diabetes UK research group, I wasn't sure if I was eligible for this position, but Professor Hitman assured me there would be no conflict. I was at the first and subsequent meetings as one of the two lay members of this group. However it wasn't long before Professor Hitman asked me to organise and chair a lay committee. I wrote to each of the diabetes UK voluntary groups within the area, explaining the situation and stressing the importance for us to be partners in this new research network.

The result of this was, in many ways, unbelievable. Every voluntary group sent at least one representative to join the lay panel. This was not just a token group; all were enthusiastic about the network and its possibilities for the future. We saw an opportunity to make a difference to the lives of people who live with diabetes as patients and carers.

Professor Hitman attends all our meetings and truly values his lay panel. We were a vital part of the NELDRN launch where I had the privilege to present the lay perspective to an audience of health professionals and local dignitaries. I have also had the honour of being with the team at the diabetes UK annual professional conference in Glasgow.

We prove lay people and healthcare professionals can meet to discuss, examine and consider new exciting research projects in a respectful and open setting. This is only possible because all of the team, led by Professor Hitman & Professor Griffiths consider this lay group a valuable asset to future research.

On behalf of the lay panel I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank every member of NELDRN for including us in all their plans. I know that 2008 is going to be a great and special year.

Sincerely yours

Barbara Elster

Local news

Trust Wellness day

The NELondDRN staffs are keen to forge links with their local colleagues in both primary & secondary care and were recently invited to hold a stall at the trust first staff wellness day of this year. During the afternoon posters were displayed explaining the role of the network and in keeping with the theme of the day we decided to raise awareness of the risk of diabetes in those who are overweight or with an increased waist circumference. From this day we received questions from staff asking more about the work that we do and hopefully raised awareness of the

importance of research. There were several members of staff who expressed an interest in partaking in research studies and the team are looking forward to attending the next wellness day later in the year.

New Office

The team were all delighted to move into their new office after being in temporary accommodation since the beginning of the network; all staff now has their own desk space and storage for all necessary study materials and are looking forward to putting this space to good use to continue to provide high quality research within the area.

Goodbye

Finally, we were very sad to say farewell to our co-clinical lead, Professor Gene Feder at the end of last year. We are however, pleased to welcome on board Professor Chris Griffiths, as our new clinical lead for Primary Care.



Professor
Gene Feder



Professor
Chris Griffiths

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