

PRESS RELEASE: Embargoed until 00.00am - 20 May 2008

Launch of a new patient resource which highlights the importance of diabetes research

A new DVD and website resource, launched today by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Diabetes Research Network, aims to encourage patients to get involved in diabetes research.

The DVD and the dedicated website (www.diabetesresearchnetworking.org) which accompanies it have been developed with patients in mind to highlight the importance of diabetes research. They focus on showing patients' perspectives of what it's really like to be involved in a clinical trial.

Diabetes affects almost 5% of the population in England. The condition is estimated to be responsible for 5% of all NHS expenditure and 9% of all hospital costs. It is the leading cause of blindness in the working age population, the single most common cause of end stage kidney failure and the leading cause of non-traumatic lower limb loss.

Research is vital in the fight against diabetes not only to develop new treatments which help patients manage their condition but also to help prevent people getting diabetes in the first place. However, very few people know about the advances being made in diabetes research or what being involved in a diabetes clinical trial actually means to a patient. The new DVD aims to address this.

Mr Pravin Chotai is one of the diabetes patients who features in the DVD. He felt it was important to be part of this initiative which gives patients a voice and an opportunity to relay their experiences of being involved in clinical trials,

'Being involved in research was a great experience for me so I was delighted to be involved in this project helping to explain to other patients what it is all about. I would definitely recommend anyone to consider being involved in research and I am sure this DVD will provide people with a much better idea of what to expect.'

The DVD and website have been developed by the NIHR Diabetes Research Network in an effort to raise awareness of diabetes research and to encourage more patients to take part. It will be distributed widely across the country to be used as a way to encourage patients and healthcare professionals to get involved in diabetes research.

Professor David Matthews, one of the directors of the Diabetes Research Network, who played a key role in developing the resource, states,

“We really need to be encouraging many more of those with diabetes to become involved in research. Diabetes is very common, and the therapies are evolving all the time. We cannot advance the treatment unless we know, in large studies, how well the therapies work, and that means that we need to capture the enthusiasm of patients. Taking part in trials is interesting, often enjoyable and certainly altruistic. We have, in Oxford, set up an active advocacy team that shows how to get involved – and why getting involved is so important. The DVD is an important part of this work.”

Professor Sally C Davies, Director General of Research and Development, Department of Health and Director of the National Institute for Health Research, said,

“The NIHR Diabetes Research Network was established because of the immediate and growing importance of the disease to public health in the UK. Diabetes research is vital to find the best ways to treat and prevent the disease and its complications as well as gain new insights into the disease. The Network provides a unique opportunity for more people to take part in this important area of research and this new DVD and information pack will be invaluable in helping people understand what a good experience it is to be involved in a clinical trial.”

The resources will be launched today at a reception held at the Houses of Parliament. The launch coincides with this year’s International Clinical Trials Day - a European initiative which uses 20 May each year to highlight the importance of clinical research.

Copies of the DVD are available by contacting
info@diabetesresearch.oxdem.ox.ac.uk

Further information is available from the Diabetes Research Networking website at
www.diabetesresearchnetworking.org

Further information is also available on the NIHR Diabetes Research Network website at
www.ukdrn.org

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Notes to Editors

“Clinical Research in Diabetes – A Patient’s Perspective”

The DVD and website projects interviewed 18 patients and family members and 19 healthcare professionals involved in clinical research. The NIHR Diabetes Research Network working in collaboration with Joose TV, captured footage during 2007 and 2008 in a series of unscripted interviews. These interviews form the basis of the DVD and website which also features text written by diabetes experts from around the UK. Patients and other parties interested in receiving a copy of this DVD should contact info@diabetesresearch.oxdem.ox.ac.uk or register their interest directly on the website.

NIHR Diabetes Research Network

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Diabetes Research Network was established in 2005 to facilitate high quality clinical research in diabetes. Its primary goal is to achieve benefits for people with diabetes, or those at risk of developing diabetes,

through excellence in clinical research. It is part of the National Institute for Health Research and the UK Clinical Research Network. Further information is available at www.ukdrn.org

UK Clinical Research Network (UKCRN)

The UK Clinical Research Network was established in February 2005 to lead the development of a UK-wide infrastructure to support clinical research in the NHS. It consists of Research Networks in Cancer, Dementias and Neurodegenerative Diseases, Diabetes, Medicines for Children, Mental Health, Primary Care and Stroke and a Comprehensive Clinical Research Network covering all areas of disease and patient need. More information on the UK Clinical Research Network is available at www.ukcrn.org.uk

National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)

The National Institute for Health Research provides the framework through which the research staff and research infrastructure of the NHS in England is positioned, maintained and managed as a national research facility. The NIHR provides the NHS with the support and infrastructure it needs to conduct first class research funded by the Government and its partners alongside high quality patient care, education and training. Its aim is to support outstanding individuals (both leaders and collaborators), working in world-class facilities (both NHS and university), and conducting leading edge research focused on the needs of patients. For more information visit www.nihr.ac.uk

International Clinical Trials Day – 20 May

International Clinical Trials Day was initiated by the European Clinical Research Infrastructures Network in 2005. The date of 20 May was chosen as it marks the start of the first clinical trial conducted in 1747, when James Lind examined the effects of citrus fruit on seamen suffering from scurvy. More information is available at www.jameslindlibrary.org