



Good news for diabetes research

Diabetes research to receive new support with the launch of eight dedicated clinical research networks

The UK Clinical Research Network and the Department of Health have appointed eight Local Research Networks to support the delivery and conduct of clinical diabetes research.

Diabetes is an increasingly important condition in the UK and now affects approx five per cent of the adult population. Strategies to prevent its development, and improve the outcomes for people with diabetes, are required. The Diabetes Research Network, with its eight dedicated Local Research Networks will make a substantial contribution to this effort.

The new networks span the country and are based in the following regions:

- North East London, (Barts and the London Hospital NHS Trust with Professors Graham Hitman and Gene Feder as clinical leads)
- South West Peninsula, (Royal Devon and Exeter NHS trust with Professor Andrew Hattersley as clinical lead)
- North and East Cumbria, (Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Trust with Professor Mark Walker as clinical lead)
- South East Midlands (University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust with Professor Melanie Davies and Dr Kamlesh Khunti as clinical leads)
- Eastern England, (Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust with Professor Nick Wareham as clinical lead)
- North West London, (St Mary's Hospital NHS Trust with Professor Robert Elkeles as clinical lead)
- North West, (Salford Royal Hospitals NHS trust with Dr Martin Gibson as clinical lead)
- Thames Valley, (Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS trust with Dr Andrew Farmer as clinical lead).

Each network will be tasked with increasing patient and public involvement in diabetes research, as well as supporting workforce development and open and transparent communication.

An average of **£300 - £400k** will be provided to each network annually to employ dedicated research nurses and similar staff who will support clinical teams in hospitals to facilitate involvement in diabetes clinical studies. Networks will be required to work collaboratively, under the guidance of the Diabetes Research Network Coordinating Centre, to utilise this funding to its full effect, and will be encouraged to build on any existing links with clinical and research support services in their local areas.

Dr Sue Roberts, National Clinical Director for Diabetes said:

"The 8 areas that have been selected include world class research organisations in their own right and this initiative will enable a much larger part of the diabetes community to work with them and gain from their experience. Coordinating the regional efforts will also enable new ideas and new treatments to be tested much more quickly and give an even greater insight into how diabetes occurs and methods of improving treatment and care."

Professor Des Johnston (Imperial College London), Director of the Diabetes Network said:

"This is a very exciting development in clinical diabetes research. It provides the infrastructure for clinical trials and other clinical research in diabetes which should place the NHS in the best position to become the world leader in this area."

Professor David Matthews (Oxford Centre for Diabetes Endocrinology and Metabolism), Associate Director of the Network said:

"I believe we now have a unique opportunity to engage those with diabetes and those undertaking care and research in a partnership which will enlarge our understanding and invigorate our search for better treatments and ultimately a cure".

The establishment of the new Local Research Networks marks the next stage of development in the Government's **£100 million** initiative to transform the clinical research environment in the UK. This was reinforced by the recent launch of the NHS R&D Strategy, "*Best Research for Best Health*", which placed the creation of research networks at its core and confirmed the importance of clinical research as a vital component in the development of more effective health care.

Andy Burnham, MP, Minister of State for Delivery and Quality, said:

"The requirement to conduct research for the improvement of health and medical treatments was one of the founding principles of the National Health Service. The NHS has a key role to play in determining the future health and wealth of this country, and the Government is determined to harness its capacity to make the UK the best place in the world for health research.

"These new Local Research Networks will play a pivotal role in creating a health research system that boasts outstanding individuals, world-class facilities and leading-edge research focused on the needs of patients and the public."

The new Local Research Networks will now begin work to facilitate patient recruitment onto a range of high quality clinical studies.

They will also work closely with their counterparts in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales to support the creation of a UK-wide clinical research infrastructure for diabetes research. In Scotland, diabetes is one of three identified areas where networks have been established under UKCRN so far, and this is being led by Dr John Petrie, University of Dundee. In Northern Ireland, diabetes will be supported as part of the Northern Ireland Clinical Research Network. In Wales, the diabetes network is one of nine thematic research networks. It is being led by Professor David Owens.

Further information is available at www.ukcrn.org.uk or www.ukdrn.org

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Notes for editors

1. 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. More information on the UK Clinical Research Network is available at www.ukcrn.org.uk

2. The Diabetes Research Network was created as part of the UKCRN to support clinical diabetes research. More information on the Diabetes Research Network is available at www.ukdrn.org

3. The UKCRN is working with each of the Topic-Specific Research Networks to develop a high quality and balanced portfolio of clinical research studies. Clinical Studies Groups have been established in each network to oversee this development process. Membership of the groups will include experts in a range of areas associated with each topic.

4. More information on the NHS R&D Strategy, "Best Research for Best Health" is available at www.dh.gov.uk/researchstrategy