



May 12th, 2014

## Patients reap the benefits of Trust's focus on research

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's growing reputation as a leader in healthcare research will be highlighted on International Clinical Trials Day on Tuesday, May 20th.

Members of the research team will have a stand in Alexander's Restaurant at South Tyneside District Hospital, from 11am to 3pm. They are urging patients, visitors and staff to find out more about the exciting developments and opportunities in research which have enabled local patients to get involved and receive the very latest treatments.

Professor Colin Rees, Clinical Director of Research and Development, said: "Involvement in high quality research is important as it allows us to offer our patients the very latest treatment options and we can learn from it how to improve healthcare for the future. We have developed a culture where research is a core activity, creating an environment for it to flourish."

The Trust's research, once restricted to a limited number of clinical specialties, now covers a wide range. In 2008/9, it participated in less than 10 trials but by 2013/14 this had grown to over 70 across a wide range of specialities, including gastroenterology, respiratory, cancer, stroke, reproductive health and community services.

The Trust is a partner organisation in the National Institute for Health Research's (NIHR) Clinical Research Network: North East and North Cumbria, which provides funding and support to NHS providers to increase opportunities for patients to take part in research. It has also received significant funding from successful grant applications and collaboration and participation with industry-funded studies, which has enabled it to develop a dedicated research team.

Research in respiratory medicine has developed rapidly, with the team securing three industry drug trials and consistently achieving recruitment targets and industry funding is being used to provide a dedicated respiratory research nurse to further develop this field of research.

Respiratory Consultant Dr Liz Fuller, recently appointed Clinical Research Speciality Lead in Respiratory for the NIHR Clinical Research Network: North East and North Cumbria, said: "We are pleased to be able to offer patients the opportunity to take part in trials at their local hospital, giving them access to the latest treatment options and enabling the patient to take an active role in their healthcare."



Maureen Jones, of South Shields, is secretary of Breathe Easy South Tyneside, a support group for people with lung conditions, and she recently participated in a respiratory trial. She said: "My main reason for taking part is to help to improve treatment in the future. Without research, we wouldn't be able to develop new drugs and, after all, most of what we rely on now has been developed through research."

The Trust is also one of the most active in the UK in bowel cancer screening research and has one of the most active gastrointestinal research departments nationally. A highlight of 2013 was spearheading a study involving patients recruited from six hospitals in the region. The trial, funded by NIHR's Research for Patient Benefit Programme, was led by Professor Rees, who is Speciality Group Lead in Gastroenterology for the NIHR Clinical Research Network: North East and North Cumbria, and his research team.

The aim of the study was to assess the accuracy of different forms of technology in characterising colonic polyps found at colonoscopy examinations of the large bowel and comparing this with the traditional laboratory analysis. A total of 1,700 patients were recruited over 19 months, more than 300 of those at South Tyneside's hospital. Data is currently being analysed by Professor Rees and the team, working with Durham University, the Trust's main academic partner in research.

\* International Clinical Trials Day is held each year to commemorate Scottish naval surgeon James Lind beginning his trials in 1747 into the causes of scurvy, in which he identified the effectiveness of citrus fruits in treating the disease.

**ends**

*Pictured above: The picture shows members of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's research and development team, including Professor Colin Rees (on the right of the back row.)*

Issued on behalf of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust by Kay Jordan

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