

May 2019

Update Newsletter – Number Three

Measuring the effects of eye alignment surgery - a feasibility study

I am sending you this update newsletter because you have previously told me you would like to receive further information about the progress of my research.

Principal Investigator: Gemma Arblaster

Overview of the research:

This research study aims to find out whether it is feasible to measure changes in vision and task performance in patients who have had eye alignment surgery for psychosocial reasons.

The NHS currently funds eye alignment surgery for strabismus (also known as eye misalignment or squint) because of the known visual and/or psychosocial benefits to patients. However, more evidence is needed about the outcomes of eye alignment surgery in adults. Some areas in England have withdrawn funding for eye alignment surgery for psychosocial reasons over concern not enough patient benefit is proven. However, evidence suggests that there are aspects of patients' lives and their vision that can improve following eye alignment surgery for a planned psychosocial benefit.

This research study aims to find out more information and improve our understanding of the potential outcomes from eye alignment surgery.

Current progress with the research project:

Phase 1.

Phase one of the study has been completed. Patients who have previously had eye alignment surgery for psychosocial reasons at Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust were interviewed to find out what they report had changed for them following surgery. The results have been analysed and were used to plan phase two of the research.

Phase 2.

Phase two of the study is underway. Patients who are planning to have eye alignment surgery for psychosocial reasons are being invited to participate in phase 2 of the study in the 'patient group'. These patients are performing a range of vision and task performance measurements before and after surgery. Currently recruitment is planned from Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust only.

Volunteers with strabismus, who aren't having surgery, are also being invited to take part in the study as part of a 'control group'. These volunteers will have the same range of measurements as the patient group, with the same gap between their two measurements.

Presenting research information

Information about how the study is progressing and some of the preliminary findings have recently been presented to and discussed with different audiences:

ARVO Conference, Vancouver, Canada
April-May 2019

The Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) is the largest vision research organisation in the world. The ARVO annual conference is a prestigious event and I was able to present some of the phase 1 study findings at the conference. This conference allowed me to meet and have discussions with experts in the field from all around the globe. It was great to see so much interest in strabismus and eye movement research and clinical practice.

Pint of Science, Sheffield
May 2019

Pint of Science is a worldwide science festival that takes place in every year in May. It brings researchers to a local pub to present their scientific discoveries to a public audience. Pint of Science currently takes place in over 40 cities in the UK and I presented my research at one of the Sheffield events. This type of presentation reaches a very different audience compared to a scientific conference and it was a different challenge to explain strabismus and eye alignment surgery research to a non-specialist audience.

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Ophthalmology teaching session
May 2019

Doctors in training have regular teaching sessions to ensure they have a broad knowledge of different aspects of eye care, even though they may ultimately specialise in one area of Ophthalmology. Explaining the research studies that are underway to the current group of Ophthalmology trainees is important so that they know more about the research that is taking place and why there is such a need for research in a certain area of medicine.

Funding:

The research is currently being funded by the NIHR. Gemma Arblaster has been awarded a Clinical Doctoral Research Fellowship to undertake this research at the Academic Unit of Ophthalmology and Orthoptics, University of Sheffield. The research began in June 2017.

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Data Protection

Since the study began, new regulations have come into effect – the new EU General Data Protection Regulation (or GDPR). You have previously chosen to receive study update newsletters, which have been offered to everyone involved in the study as a participant, advisor or supervisor. To be able to receive these update newsletters I have recorded your preferred contact details (email or postal address) on a document, which is kept securely on a password protected University of Sheffield computer system. This information will be destroyed 5 years after the study has been completed (study end - May 2020).

The University of Sheffield will act as the 'Data Controller' for this study. This means that the University is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The legal basis for me keeping your contact details is 'performance of a task carried out in the public interest'. If at any time if you no longer wish to receive these study update newsletters, please contact me and I will delete your contact details from my records.

The 'sponsor' of the research is Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

If you have further questions about the study or your information, you can contact me directly.

If you would like to contact the sponsor directly you can contact:

Dr Dipak Patel, Clinical Research Office, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. dipak.patel@sth.nhs.uk

Further information, including details about how and why the University processes your personal information, how we keep your information secure, and your legal rights (including how to complain if you feel that your personal information has not been handled correctly), can be found in the University's Privacy Notice

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>

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NHS
**National Institute for
Health Research**

Further information about the recent presentations:

ARVO Conference, 2019

<https://www.arvo.org/>

Pint of Science, Sheffield, 2019.

<https://pintofscience.co.uk/events/sheffield>