

DRIE (Dehydration Recognition in our Elders)

Participant information sheet

Your care home will be hosting new research that aims to develop a method to identify early dehydration in older people. This leaflet will tell you a little about the research, and what it will mean for you.

Water-loss dehydration – what is the problem?

Dehydration happens when we don't drink enough for our needs. It is bad for all of us. In older people severe dehydration increases confusion and falls, and makes sudden hospital admission more likely. We don't have a good method of recognising dehydration early, before it becomes severe. Being able to identify dehydration early would allow measures, such as extra encouragement with drinking, to prevent severe dehydration.



What is the study about?

The research will identify an easy method that can signal when someone needs to drink a bit more. We will do this by interviewing people living in care homes. Later, care home staff will be trained in how to recognise early water-loss dehydration.

Who will be involved in this research?

We will involve people living in care homes aged at least 65 years, who do not have heart failure or renal failure. Within your care home we will ask you and other people whether you would like to be part of the study. We will ask you to make this decision yourself if you can, allowing time for you to talk with friends, relatives and staff. If you cannot make this decision yourself we will ask your relative (consultee) whether you would want to participate if you could still make this decision yourself. Overall we will recruit 200 older people.

If I take part in the study, what will happen?

If you take part you will be asked to have some simple tests, answer some questions and give a blood sample (together taking up to 75 minutes). This will be followed up by a shorter second interview a year later (taking about 10 minutes). Both will be in a private area of the care home. Both times we will also ask your care home manager for information on your health, medications and how well you can carry out some tasks (like dressing).



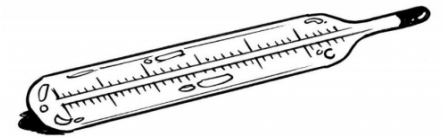
Why is the blood test needed?

The blood test is needed as we will use it to measure serum osmolality. This is the best way of assessing water-loss dehydration. This is the measure that the other tests will be compared to, when we see how well they work in identifying dehydration. The final method that we develop to identify water-loss dehydration will NOT include a blood test.



Who will know the results of my tests?

Your blood and urine test results, blood pressure, heart rate and body temperature will be given to your care home manager and to your own GP, as well as the researchers.



What else will be assessed?

We will use a series of simple tests and questions. One is the squeeze test. We will check how quickly your flesh springs back after your hand is lightly squeezed. We will find out if this is a good indicator of dehydration. Other tests include:

- Looking at your tongue for dryness or furrows
- Body temperature
- Assessing how clearly you are thinking
- Change in your blood pressure and pulse on standing
- Weight and height and recent weight change
- Feelings of thirst, tiredness, anxiety or being out-of-sorts
- Worries about getting to the toilet in time or getting up in the night
- Presence of a headache or feeling out of sorts
- Urine colour and other urine tests
- Your favourite drinks, and if you drink between meals
- Researchers will also watch to see what happens when you are offered a drink or want to go to the toilet.



I'm thirsty



Will any other information be recorded?

Yes, we will also gather some information from your care home manager. We will ask them about your ability to carry out tasks like dressing and going to the toilet, how active you are, current and recent health problems, and medications. We will ask your care home manager about your health and physical abilities again in 1 and 2 years time.

We will ask you about your, and your spouse's, jobs and previous postcode. If you do not remember this we will ask your care home manager.

If you agree, we will ask your care home to weigh you weekly for a year (though you can decide not to do this, and still be involved in the study if you like). After a year we will ask for a shorter meeting, to follow up your health and wellbeing.



What are the risks?

The blood test could be slightly painful, and could cause bleeding or bruising, though we will work to minimise this. When we ask you to stand up we will ensure that this is safe, supporting you if necessary, and will ask you to use any walking frame or sticks you would normally use.

Do I have to participate?

No, you should only participate if you really want to. If you decide not to participate you do not need to give a reason. If you decide not to participate there will be NO bad effects – it will not alter your care or support in your care home or with your GP.



What will I gain from involvement?

We hope you will enjoy the interview, and we aim to make it pleasant and friendly. If you participate you may also feel you are helping other older people as we learn to recognise dehydration. If you choose to participate you will receive a £10 voucher or equivalent gift for the first interview, and again for the second interview.



Who is funding the research?

The research will be funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The funding is as part of a Career Development Fellowship to Lee Hooper, the researcher. Some of the research may be used towards a PhD for Diane Bunn.

Who has assessed the ethical implications of the research?

The research has been checked and accepted by a national ethics committee, the National Research Ethics Service Committee London-East (16th Dec 2011, 11/LO/1997).

Will the information gathered be confidential?

Yes, the only information gathered in the research that will be available outside the researcher and research assistant team will be your blood and urine test results, blood pressure, heart rate and body temperature, which will be reported back to your care home manager and your GP. All other information will remain confidential and will be kept separate from your name and identifying details. Research publications and publicity about the results of the research will not allow identification of individuals of individuals or care homes.



Would you like to participate?

If you live in a care home and would like to participate we will talk to you about the study and ask some questions. If you show us you understand we will ask you to sign a consent form. If we are not sure that you understand and can remember about the study we will ask your relative (consultee) whether they believe that you would want to participate if you could make that decision.

If you have any questions or suggestions please contact the lead researcher:

Dr. Lee Hooper

Norwich Medical School, University of East Anglia

Norwich NR4 7TJ, Norfolk, UK

Phone (mobile): 0781 391 7444

Email: l.hooper@uea.ac.uk, DRIE Website: <http://driestudy.appspot.com/>

If anything goes wrong, or if you have any worries or complaints about the research or the way it is conducted please contact Lee Hooper or Sue Steel (who is the study sponsor). Sue can be contacted on 01603 591486 or by email at sue.steel@uea.ac.uk