

Dehydration Recognition in Elders (DRIE study)

Being in an advisory group

Your care home will be hosting new research that aims to develop a method to identify early dehydration in older people. This sheet will tell you about the research and about the advisory groups that we will be running.

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. But if we are able to identify dehydration early it would allow us to take preventive measures, such as extra encouragement with drinking.

What is the study about?

The research aims to identify an easy method which will signal when someone needs to drink a bit more. There are some methods which are thought to be good at detecting dehydration, but few are fully tested. So we will ask people living in care homes to have these tests so that we can work out which are best. If we develop a method that is accurate and easy to use we will make sure that all care home staff can use it.



Being involved in an advisory group

Ensuring the research is acceptable to care home residents

We would like to set up a group of care home residents to advise us and ensure that the methods of identification of dehydration that we develop are acceptable to older people. To do this we would like to meet with 2 or 3 residents within their care home.

Ensuring the research is realistic for care staff

We are also looking for a group of care staff to advise us. This group of 2-3 staff working in a single care home would advise us on the practicality of the methods we are developing. They would tell us whether the examinations would be used by care staff with their residents.

How often will advisory groups meet, and what will they do?

The groups will meet every 2 or 3 months to discuss issues around drinking and hydration in residential care homes. They will help to plan the study, work with us to assess and minimise the invasiveness, and maximise the practicality, of the developed dehydration assessment method. Our advisors would help us interpret and disseminate the results. The group would also work with the researchers to ensure the research examines important issues, draws sensible conclusions and plans good future research.

If I get involved, how much time will it take?

Being involved in an advisory group will take about 90 minutes every 3 months (within your care home). Participants may drop out at any time they want to.

What will I gain from being in the advisory group?

Residents and staff may like to discuss ways to improve drinking and recognising dehydration (as well as the difficulties). You may also like to help us make sure that the methods we develop are acceptable to older people and practical to use. You will hear research results early, learn about how research is conducted, and help to disseminate findings. Residents and staff who participate will receive a £10 voucher for each meeting attended.

Who is funding the research?

The research is funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), as part of a Career Development Fellowship to Lee Hooper.

Who is assessing the ethical implications of the research?

The research has been assessed and approved by a national ethics committee. The study was agreed by the London East (Ilford) Research Ethics Committee in January 2012.

Getting involved

If you are interested in participating in either the residents or the staff advisory committee please contact Lee Hooper (or ask your care home manager to do this for you). Lee will be happy to discuss the research with you further and talk about your involvement.

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