Study information for community pharmacists

Study title: Early Intervention & Referral of Patients with Head and Neck Cancer

You are invited to consider participating in a research project. This document has been developed to help you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information fully. Talk to others about this study if you wish. Ask us if there is anything which is not clear or if you would like further information on any aspect of the research. Take time to carefully decide whether or not you want to take part.

1. Why have I been approached?

You have been approached as you are community pharmacist.

2. What is the purpose of the study?

North–East England has the highest incidence of head and neck cancer in the country. Mouth and throat cancers can be identified by a specialist at an outpatient appointment and confirmed by a biopsy, but sometimes there are delays. We would like to speed up how quickly patients get to see the specialist.

Community pharmacists provide an increasing range of healthcare services. They routinely offer advice to patients seeking over-the-counter treatments for common symptoms, including those that may be related to head and neck cancer. This places them in an ideal position to offer screening for head and neck cancer through the use of www.ORLhealth.com (an online tool that has been developed to improve head and neck cancer detection rates).

This screening method is being considered by a range of healthcare professionals as it may help to identify and refer patients at an earlier stage of

Sturrock A, *et al. BMJ Open* 2023; 13:e068607. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2022-068607

their cancer for formal diagnosis and appropriate care. We would like to explore ideas around community pharmacists screening for head and neck cancer by conducting a series of interviews, including some with community pharmacists.

3. Do I have to take part?

You do not have to take part, it is entirely up to you.

4. What will happen if I agree to take part?

If you wish to take part please email Dr Andrew Sturrock andrew.sturrock@sunderland.ac.uk

We will contact you to arrange an interview at a time convenient with you to explore the potential for community pharmacists to facilitate the early detection and referral of patients with suspected head and neck cancer. During the interview we will also ask questions about your experience, education and training and employment status. None of this information will be identifiable to you. You can choose if you would prefer to be interviewed by telephone or video conferencing (Zoom or Teams via your mobile phone or computer).

We aim to interview approximately 15 pharmacists from across the region. We will ask you to sign and post a consent form to us prior to the interview (you should have been provided with a postage paid envelope with this information). This consent form is to ensure that you have understood and feel comfortable taking part in the research study. The interview will last between 30-45 minutes, but the interview can be paused to allow for breaks at any time, and we can call you back to complete the interview when it is convenient for you. The interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed into a document to enable analysis, but names of individuals will be anonymised so that your identity will be protected and remain fully confidential when the study is formally reported. If the interview takes place via Zoom or Teams then you can choose to turn off the video if you

wish for the recording. Telephone interviews will be recorded using a digital audio recording device.

5. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Taking part in this study will not benefit you directly, although it may result in the development of new community pharmacy services. The information we collect will help us to apply for further funding to test the screening process, provided it is considered a worthy idea in detecting early stage head and neck cancers.

6. What are the disadvantages or risks of taking part?

The main disadvantage would be giving up the time it would take to attend the interview. We consider the interview content to be non-sensitive, and not likely to cause distress or anxiety. There is no requirement to answer any questions which you would prefer not to.

7. **Will participation in the study be kept confidential?**

Yes, your participation will be kept confidential. No one will know that you took part and any quotations used in the research will not be identifiable to you. However, if there was something said during the course of the interview that suggested professional malpractice, risk to you or risk to individuals, we would have to report it to appropriate authorities as part of our duty of care to people taking part in the research.

8. What will happen in the event that I want to withdraw from the study?

You can stop being part of the study at any time, without giving a reason, but we will keep information about you that we already have. If you arrange to be interviewed and change your mind, that is fine but if you could notify us to let us know that would be helpful as it will save us valuable time. If we start the interview and you change your mind, you can stop without having to explain your decision to do so.

9. What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the research will be shared with professionals and health organisations at conferences, meetings and Local Practice Networks for community pharmacists, to improve awareness of the need to detect head and neck cancers as early as we possibly can. We will also write up in the study for publication in a healthcare research journal. You will not be identified in any of these, but if you would like a copy of the results we can send them to you after the study has finished.

10. What if there is a problem?

Any complaint about the way you have been dealt with during the study or any possible harm you might have suffered will be addressed. If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, please speak to the researchers who will do their best to answer your questions (Dr Andrew Sturrock, telephone 0191 515 2448).

11. Who is organising and funding the research?

The study is funded by a research grant from the National Institute for Health Research Applied Research Collaboration for the North East and North Cumbria, which covers the salary of some of the researchers and the costs of doing the study.

12. Who has reviewed the study?

The study has been reviewed by the University of Sunderland who have agreed to sponsor the study and Sunderland Royal and Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trusts who are hosting the study. In addition, all research is reviewed by an independent group of people called an ethics committee, to

protect your interests and ensure that the research is safe and ethical to perform. This study has been reviewed by NHS North West - Preston Research Ethics Committee.

13. How will we use information about you?

We will need to use information from you for this research project. This information will include your name and contact details.
People will use this information to do the research or to check your records to make sure that the research is being done properly. and people who do not need to know who you are will not be able to see your name or contact details. Your personal information will be replaced by a code number instead. We will keep all information about you safe and secure. Once we have finished the study, we will keep some of the data so we can check the results. We will write our reports in a way that no-one will be able to work out that you took part in the study.

14. What are your choices about how your information is used?

You can stop being part of the study at any time, without giving a reason.

15. Where can you find out more about how your information is used?

You can find out more about how we use your information at www.hra.nhs.uk/information-about-patients/ or you can contact a member of the research team:

Dr Andrew Sturrock:

Telephone: 0191 515 2448
Email: Andrew.sturrock@sunderland.ac.uk
Address: School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Sciences Complex
University of Sunderland
Sunderland
SR1 3SD

If you have any questions or wish to make a complaint about any aspect of this research please contact the Sponsor's representative at the address below.

Sponsors Contact Details

Mr Martin Finlayson:

Telephone: 0191 515 3065
Email: martin.finlayson@sunderland.ac.uk
Address: Edinburgh Building
University of Sunderland
Sunderland
SR1 3SD

Those participating in this study will be given copies of their signed consent form.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information leaflet.