

IMPULSIVITY REACHES ITS TARGET – ONE YEAR EARLY

A North West based research study into Parkinson's Disease has reached its recruitment target a year early.

The 'Impulsivity' study opened to recruitment in July 2007 and has recruited the 100 people needed for the study 12 months ahead of schedule

Dr Iracema Leroi, consultant in old age psychiatry at Lancashire Care Trust, is investigating the cognitive, personality and psychiatric risk factors in people with Parkinson's Disease.

Dr Leroi said: "Many people think Parkinson's Disease only affects people's motor skills but what is less known are the mental health problems it can cause. They can include apathy, obsessive or compulsive behaviour, and problems controlling impulses such as losing inhibitions – also known as impulse control problems. These problems can have a significant impact on the lives of Parkinson's sufferers and their carers. The Impulsivity study is looking to understand these problems better."

The study is examining two groups of people with Parkinson's Disease: those with impulsivity problems and those with motivation problems. Both groups will then be compared to a control group of people with Parkinson's but without either problem.

Dr Leroi added: "We were anticipating that recruitment for those suffering from impulse control disorders would be difficult as the condition is considered to be quite rare. However, through the study we have come to realise that the problem may be more widespread and under-recognised by doctors.

"To reach our recruitment target 12 months early is a great achievement and I'd like to thank everyone who has signed up to take part in the trial as well as Michelle Andrews who has carried out research assessments of patients in their homes. Also, without the support of Lynne Owen and the staff at North West DeNDRoN we would not have been able to achieve this target so soon.

Dr Jane Byrne, DeNDRoN NW clinical lead, said: "Providing support to studies such as Impulsivity are vital if we are to improve the care and treatment of people with Parkinson's and other neurodegenerative diseases or dementia."

Patients have been recruited from across a number of North West hospitals, including:

- Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust (Dr Mark Kellett and Dr Dick)

- Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust (Dr Vassallo at The Royal Oldham Hospital and Dr Raw at Fairfield General Hospital, Bury)
- Wirral Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (Dr Turnbull at Arrowe Park Hospital)
- Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust (Dr Tidswell and Dr Leroi at Royal Blackburn Hospital, Hill View)
- East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust (Dr Tidswell at Royal Blackburn Hospital)
- Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (Dr Tidswell at Royal Preston Hospital)
- Dr Naqvi at Chorley District General

The study has been funded by the Parkinson's Disease Society, along with support from NIHR North West DeNDRoN, which provides support to clinical research into dementia and neurodegenerative diseases.

The key findings from the study are set to be presented in June 2009 at the Movement Disorders Society Annual Conference in Paris.

Notes to editors

NIHR DeNDRoN North West provides support for research studies and clinical trials for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of degenerative neurological conditions, including: Dementia (including Alzheimer's disease), Parkinson's disease, Motor Neurone Disease, and Huntington's disease.

The network covers over seven million people and we work with researchers, nurses, doctors and other healthcare staff from NHS trusts and universities across the region as well as the pharmaceutical industry, enabling them to develop and carry out research that is appropriate to patients' needs.