

DRAFT PRESS RELEASE

Participants needed to take part in national COVID-19 trial

Researchers at the University of Oxford are appealing for people with typical COVID-19 symptoms, aged 50-64 years with existing medical conditions, or 65 years and over with or without existing medical conditions, to take part in a national priority status clinical trial - PRINCIPLE.

Those aged 50 years and over are at higher risk of developing more severe illness and complications.

Currently, there are no effective treatments available that have been shown through clinical trials to reduce disease burden in the community.

PRINCIPLE is evaluating whether certain commonly used medicines may prevent patients with COVID-19 from becoming more unwell and needing hospital care. Several medicines with well-known safety profiles are being evaluated and compared with usual care. Currently these medicines are:

[Current PRINCIPLE IMP Arms]

The study design – a pragmatic, platform, randomised controlled trial – means that new treatments can be investigated or halted quickly, as and when possible treatments come to light or existing ones are shown to be ineffective.

The research team are appealing for people experiencing symptoms that are likely to be caused by a COVID-19 infection, for fewer than 15 days, to join the trial. People may also be eligible to join if they have had a positive test for SARS-Co-V2 infection which was taken less than 15 days ago, and are unwell with any symptoms

People who are already well on the way to recovery or who are otherwise healthy are not eligible to participate in the PRINCIPLE Trial.

The trial is funded from UK Research and Innovation and the Department of Health and Social Care through the National Institute for Health Research as part of the UK Government's rapid research response fund. The trial team are working with GP surgeries, care homes, NHS111 and ambulance services across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to recruit patients.

Professor Fiona Watt, Executive Chair of the Medical Research Council, which funded the trial with the NIHR, said:

"This trial is very important. It is focussed on older people and those with co-morbidities, who are much more likely to be hospitalised with COVID-19. We need more people to join the trial to see if we can identify a drug that helps prevent people reaching hospital and speeds up their recovery."

Dr Emma Ogburn, Director of Operations at Oxford University's Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences Clinical Trials Unit, said:

Platform Randomised trial of Interventions against COVID-19 In older peoPLE

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Professor Christopher Butler IRAS Project number: 281958 REC Reference number: 20/SC/058

“It’s really rewarding and exciting to be part of a trial where we are asking the general public to help find potential COVID-19 treatments. No face to face visits are needed, just internet access and participant packs will be couriered to you at home. In addition to our clinical study team being at the end of the phone, your GP practice will also be aware of the study and can discuss it with you.”

[Local clinician quote, patient representative or PRINCIPLE participant can be inserted here]

Further details about the study can be found at: <https://www.principletrial.org/>.

A list of participating GP surgeries can be found here: <https://www.principletrial.org/health-professionals/practices-participating-in-the-principle-trial>.

Please note, if your practice isn’t listed here you can still self-enrol in the trial.

Trial news and updates can also be found on our social media pages:

Twitter –

Facebook -

Notes to editors

For general enquiries please contact: Dan Richards-Doran, Communications Manager, Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences, University of Oxford. dan.richards-doran@phc.ox.ac.uk 01865 617870.

For enquiries about the study, please contact the study team: principle@phc.ox.ac.uk

About the National Institute for Health Research:

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is funded by the Department of Health to improve the health and wealth of the nation through research. The NIHR is the research arm of the NHS. Since its establishment in April 2006, the NIHR has transformed research in the NHS. It has increased the volume of applied health research for the benefit of patients and the public, driven faster translation of basic science discoveries into tangible benefits for patients and the economy, and developed and supported the people who conduct and contribute to applied health research. The NIHR plays a key role in the Government’s strategy for economic growth, attracting investment by the life-sciences industries through its world-class infrastructure for health research. Together, the NIHR people, programmes, centres of excellence and systems represent the most integrated health research system in the world. For further information, visit the NIHR website (www.nihr.ac.uk).

About UK Research & Innovation:

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Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). For further information, visit the UKRI website (<https://www.ukri.org/>).

Oxford University's Medical Sciences Division is one of the largest biomedical research centres in Europe, with over 2,500 people involved in research and more than 2,800 students. The University is rated the best in the world for medicine and life sciences, and it is home to the UK's top-ranked medical school. It has one of the largest clinical trial portfolios in the UK and great expertise in taking discoveries from the lab into the clinic. Partnerships with the local NHS Trusts enable patients to benefit from close links between medical research and healthcare delivery.

Within the division, the Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences undertakes internationally acclaimed teaching and research that improves the primary care that GP practices deliver, and is ranked top in the UK. The department's research covers a broad range of primary care issues including cardiovascular and metabolic disease, health behaviours, infectious disease and child health, patient experience, research methods and evidence-based medicine. www.phc.ox.ac.uk

The Primary Care Clinical Trials Unit is an integral part of the University of Oxford's Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences. Our research themes are aligned with the departmental priorities on infectious diseases, cardiovascular and metabolic disease, behavioural medicine and other topics of major national and international importance. In 2016 the unit recruited almost 6000 participants from around 600 sites in over 20 countries. The unit is part of the Primary Care and Vaccine Collaborative Clinical Trials Unit (PCVC-CTU) consortium in recognition of its ability to coordinate high quality, academically-led, multi-centred clinical trials. We work closely with NHS Trusts across England and Wales and the UK Clinical Research Network.