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PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET
The Genetics Of Ankylosing Spondylitis

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, it is important to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take your time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with your friends, relatives and/or your GP if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Further information on ethics in research can be found on the National Research Ethics Service website; www.nres.npsa.nhs.uk

Thank you for reading this information sheet.

What is the purpose of the study?
For the past 15 years our group at The Botnar Research Centre in Oxford has been studying ankylosing spondylitis (AS). This is a relatively common inflammatory disease mainly affecting the spine that affects about 3 in 1000 people in the UK. It is known that AS can 'run' in families and that it has a strong genetic or inherited element, probably involving at least thirty different genes. Using modern laboratory techniques it should now be possible to identify most of the important genes involved in diseases like AS. Indeed, our research programme has already identified several "AS" genes that have given us a much clearer understanding of the processes by which AS develops. Our goal is to identify as many of these genes as possible so that we can understand the disease better and develop better ways of diagnosing and treating it.

Why have I been chosen?
You have been invited because you have a diagnosis of Ankylosing Spondylitis. All of us (except identical twins) vary in our genetic makeup and this variation can make us more susceptible to various types of illness. Using sophisticated laboratory techniques it is now possible to identify the variation in literally tens of thousands of genes in thousands of individuals simultaneously. We will compare the genetic variants of particular genes in a large number of patients with AS with the general population. The presence of a higher (or

lower) frequency of a particular variant in people with AS than in the general population would suggest that this genetic variant makes individuals more (or less) likely to develop AS. However, to be confident of our findings it is important to study several thousand affected individuals and to compare them with a similar number of individuals without AS. To date we have recruited about 6,000 unrelated individuals with AS in the UK but ideally we would like to double this to be confident of detecting all the major genes likely to be involved in AS.

Do I have to take part?
It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not you wish to participate. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this Information Sheet to keep and will be asked to sign a consent form. You should feel no obligation to take part and you would be completely free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. Whatever your decision, your future medical care will not be affected in any way.

What will happen to me if I take part?
Each individual who agrees to take part will be asked to fill in a short form about their condition and provide some family details. Each participant will be asked to provide a sample of saliva using a special collection kit (full instructions included).We may request further information about your AS from your GP or specialist. All saliva samples are returned to us in Oxford (freepost packaging will be provided) so that we can prepare DNA for the special laboratory tests to identify AS genes. In the unlikely event that the saliva sample you provide is insufficient for the special laboratory test, we will contact you to request for another sample. Similarly, if we were unable to extract the data from the questionnaire, we may contact you to request the data again.

What will happen to me if I take part in Clinic? ***(Only Applicable to Patients attending Clinic at the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre)***
Typically we would take 20ml (about 4 teaspoons) of your blood for study purposes. This study will not involve any tests, procedures or hospital visits additional to your normal treatment.
If routine blood tests are required by your doctor we will endeavour to take all samples at the same time. If you do not wish to give blood a saliva sample could be taken instead.

What are the possible benefits and disadvantages of taking part?
There will be no direct benefit at this time to individuals taking part. However this research has already yielded insights into the causes of AS with the discovery of several genes including two that are involved in inflammation (IL23R and ERAP1). These findings may eventually be developed into new forms of treatment. We hope that this research will eventually lead to a greater understanding of the disease and better treatments but this may take many years to achieve. The amount of blood being taken is too small to affect your health but having a blood test may sometimes result in bruising.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?
Every participant will be allocated an individual number, ensuring that their information will be kept strictly confidential on our secure database. Only members of the research team and their scientific associates will have access to the research records and data base in an anonymised form.

What will happen to the results of the study?
From time to time, reports from the study will be published in the specialist medical press and in the newsletter of the National Ankylosing Spondylitis Society. Specific results on the genetic testing will not be released to individual participants.

Who is organising and funding the research?
This research is being organised by staff at the University of Oxford and supported by long term funding by the Wellcome Trust, the National Ankylosing Spondylitis Society, the Arthritis Research UK, and the National Institute for Health research and by an unrestricted grant from Abbott Laboratories.

What if there is a problem?
Given the nature of this study, it is highly unlikely that you will suffer harm by taking part. However, the University has arrangements in place to provide for harm arising from participation in the study for which the University is the Research Sponsor.

If you wish to complain about any aspect of the way in which you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, you should contact Professor Paul Wordsworth, Phone number: 01865 737545, Email:paul.wordsworth@ndorms.ox.ac.uk or you may contact the University of Oxford Clinical Trials and Research Governance (CTRG) office on 01865 572224 or the head of CTRG, email ctrg@admin.ox.ac.uk.

Who has reviewed the study?
It has been reviewed by experts in the field, has the support of the Eastern Multi-centre Research Ethics Committee (Project Number 98/5/23) and the local ethics committee for your area.

Contact for further information
If you require any more information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact:

Jonathan Lau (Study Co-ordinator) on 01865 737646
Helen Bunting (Research Nurse) on 01865 737417