

# Network News

## Antibiotics for the prevention of cellulitis of the leg



Well here it is – the moment of truth. Pilot work for this important trial is due to begin in just a couple of months. We have had a tremendous response from you all and now have 30

dermatologists who have agreed to help with identifying patients for this project. This is a great achievement, so thank you all for your dedication and support.

This pilot work will be crucial in helping us to design the definitive trial (due to commence early 2005). In essence, we hope to:

- ❑ Test the feasibility of running such a trial through the Network
- ❑ Estimate recruitment rates and acceptance of randomisation.
- ❑ Assess the impact of the different inclusion / exclusion criteria.
- ❑ Determine the proportion of patients who exhibit possible predictors of response.
- ❑ Establish if the outcome measures are appropriate, are amenable for collection through the Network, and whether they are acceptable to patients.
- ❑ Clarify our definition of cellulitis.
- ❑ Gather data that will help to inform our sample size calculations.

It is anticipated that the pilot work will take six months to complete. A summary of our findings will be reported in a subsequent newsletter.

If any of you would like to get involved in the main RCT, do get in touch with either Kim or Phillippa (*contact details overleaf*), as we are still in the process of identifying recruiting centres.

## Other trials under development

Work on the Pyoderma Gangrenosum and the Lentigo Maligna trials is continuing. It is hoped that pilot work for the Pyoderma Gangrenosum trial will commence towards the end of this year, so we'll be asking for your help again soon. If any of you would like to register an interest in either of these studies, please contact Kim in the first instance.

## Submission of vignettes to the HTA



The UK DCTN represents the BAD in submitting trial ideas to the Health Technology Assessment Board (HTA) through an affiliate member's scheme. This is a great way of raising the profile of dermatology within the NHS, and is another way of helping to secure much needed funding for our trials.

Whilst the UK DCTN remains true to its original aim of fostering research into rarer skin diseases, the affiliate scheme is nevertheless a useful mechanism for flagging up areas of potential interest to the NHS. If you would like to propose a topic for submission to the HTA, simply submit a vignette to Kim using the HTA's standard format listed below:

- *Describe the health technology where further evidence or guidance is needed*
- *Describe the patient group and health care setting*
- *State why this research or evidence is important to the NHS*
- *Provide any information you can on existing evidence*

Please bear in mind that the trial suggestions most likely to succeed are those that:

- Are associated with high morbidity or mortality
- Have significant cost implications for the NHS
- Are supported by a recent systematic review, pointing to the need for further research

## Infrastructure funding

The core infrastructure costs for the Network are currently met by a grant from the NHS National Co-ordinating Centre for Research Capacity Development. This funds two part-time positions - Kim Thomas as Network co-ordinator and Phillippa Scott as administrator. Funding is in place through until March 2005 and we have just heard that the NCCRC have agreed a further three year extension until March 2008.

In addition to this core funding we have also been approaching our pharmaceutical colleagues with a view to providing a consortium fund. Last year we received donations from Leo, GlaxoSmithKline, Roche, Galderma and 3M (we now have commitments from Fujisawa and 3M for this year). If any of you know of any companies that you think would be interested in supporting our

activities, do get in touch as we have flyers and an annual report ready for distribution.

### Steering Group Meetings

For some time now we have been working hard to get the organisational structure of the Network right. We have a constitution in place and have become affiliate members of the BAD.

In order to get the most out of our quarterly steering group meetings, it has been suggested that we adopt a slightly more formal approach in identifying steering group members. Up until now, any member of the Network who has been interested in the activities of the group has been welcome to attend the meetings. This will continue to be the case in the future, although we would also like to see a more stable core of attendees in order to foster a sense of ownership and direction for the Network.

The steering group will be a relatively large body of 30 or so members and will consist of:

- Executive Group members
- Regional Co-ordinators
- Statistical advisors
- Health Economists
- Specialist Dermatology Nurses
- Patient representatives
- Database advisors

We will be asking you to confirm the membership of the steering group at the AGM in Belfast. If any of you would like to become a steering group member, please contact Kim prior to the meeting. Meetings are usually held in London (BAD House) and are 3-4 times per year. Forthcoming meetings are outlined in the *Dates for your Diary* section of this Newsletter. As a steering group member you will be influential in establishing the future direction of the Network and will play a key role in peer reviewing future research proposals.

### Dates for your diary

#### Network Meetings:

- **Tuesday 6 July 2004**  
5.15-6.15pm Annual General Meeting  
Titanic Room, Waterfront Hall, Belfast
- **Wednesday 7 July 2004**  
7.30-9.00am Executive Group only  
Titanic Room, Waterfront Hall, Belfast
- **Friday 22 October 2004**  
BAD House, London  
1.00-3.00pm Steering Group  
(3.00-4.00pm Executive Group only)

#### Other Meetings:

##### The EDEN-IDEA Congress

10-12 October 2004  
Venice, Italy

Contact: [luigi.naldi@gised.it](mailto:luigi.naldi@gised.it)

##### Skin Cancer An Evidence Based Update

Thursday 12 May 2005  
Novotel, Nottingham  
(proceeds to UK DCTN)

### Evidence Based Update Meeting



In April 2004 the Centre of Evidence Based Dermatology, University of Nottingham held its annual update meeting – this year's topic was Psoriasis. The proceeds from these meetings are donated to the UK DCTN. This was the third such meeting and it was received with great enthusiasm. Many delegates commented in particular on how much they enjoyed the format of the meeting. Along with recent RCTs and systematic reviews, a panel of 'Three Wise Men' answered questions raised by members of The Psoriasis Association.

The topic for next year's meeting on 12 May 2005 will be Skin Cancer (see *Dates for your Diary*).

#### Contact details:

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