

# Network News

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## 1. Welcome

Welcome to the July edition of Network News. This edition focuses on the PATCH study, the first randomised controlled trial (RCT) to be undertaken by the Network. We are delighted to announce that the first patient has recently been recruited into the PATCH study.

## 2. The PATCH Study

### What is the PATCH Study?



The PATCH study is actually two randomised placebo-controlled trials, both of which are designed to investigate whether prophylactic antibiotics can help prevent repeat episodes of cellulitis. PATCH I will recruit patients who have had at least two episodes of cellulitis and PATCH II will recruit both recurrent cases and first time cases.

### Why do we have two cellulitis trials?

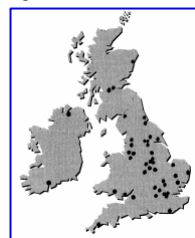
Funding bids for PATCH were submitted to two organisations, Action Medical Research and the BUPA Foundation, to increase the chance of success. To our delight, both organisations were happy to fund the study. So we now have two closely related trials which differ only in the type of patients and the duration of prophylaxis.

Both studies are described in one protocol. This means that all recruiting centres will be able to enter patients into both studies. Initially recruitment will concentrate on PATCH I, but since only recurrent cases can be recruited into PATCH

I, any patients identified who have had only one episode of cellulitis will be offered the chance to enter PATCH II. Once recruitment for PATCH I is complete then we can concentrate on entering recurrent cases into PATCH II.

### Response to call for recruiting centres

Firstly, we would like to say a big thank you!! There was a tremendous response from Network members willing to act as recruiting centres for PATCH. A total of 49 members expressed an interest in taking part in the study, which clearly demonstrates the high level of enthusiasm that exists within our Network. You can see from the map that this is truly a multi-centre, UK-wide study. There are 43 centres going through the process of getting local approval to conduct the study.



Remember, if you were not able to take part in this study for any reason, there should be other funded trials in the future which you might like to get involved with.

### Where are we now?

The first patient was recruited in June after MHRA and central ethics committee approval were received for both studies. Chris Dunn is the PATCH trial manager, and is based at the co-ordinating centre at Nottingham. She has been busy supporting centres to get local ethical and management approval and is currently helping set up the remaining centres.

If you didn't respond to the initial call for recruiting centres but would like to take part, then please contact Chris and she will talk you through what you need to do.

### Getting local approvals

If you are a recruiting centre and have felt that the whole process of filling out the COREC and R&D forms has been too onerous then please bear with us. We had hoped that the electronic COREC Part C form and the standard R&D form would simplify things but this hasn't proved to be the case. Chris is helping out as many of you as she can with the form filling – she just needs to get a small amount of information from you then she can prepare them for you to sign and submit.

Please be assured that for all future studies, we will be doing **all the form filling here at the co-ordinating centre** to eliminate the burden on you as clinicians. So if you have been frustrated by the process this time it shouldn't deter you from taking part in the future.

### Are you a Regional Co-ordinator?

If you are a regional co-ordinator, we would really like your help now to publicise the PATCH study. The pilot study has shown that recruitment is going to be difficult. In some centres, cellulitis patients are mainly seen in A & E and return home straightaway. In other centres, patients are often admitted, but this could be to one of many different wards. Either way, it is very difficult to locate and contact these patients whilst they are in the hospital. So we need to have as many clinicians and nurses as possible looking out for cellulitis patients on behalf of investigators to facilitate recruitment.

This is where the regional co-ordinators can help. We would like you to publicise the study as much as possible, perhaps at departmental meetings or research club. A powerpoint presentation about the study is available to download from the website ([www.ukdctn.org](http://www.ukdctn.org)) - click on Recruiting Centres and then the PATCH logo (you will need to enter your id number and password), or if you would prefer to receive it by email, please contact Phillippa.

If you are not a recruiting investigator yourself, please contact the trial manager, Chris Dunn, to find out who you or your colleagues should notify if a potential participant is identified.

If you would like to become a regional co-ordinator, or to find out more about the role of a regional co-ordinator, please contact Jo Chalmers.

### 3. Surveys

In the spring we mailed out two surveys to help with the design of the bullous pemphigoid (BPOP) study and the Dapsone for vasculitis study. The response to these surveys was excellent, so thank you once again. Both surveys provided a great deal of very useful information regarding the feasibility of running these studies. There will be more on this topic in the next newsletter....



You should recently have received a letter and a questionnaire from Kim Thomas and Tony Ormerod regarding the pyoderma gangrenosum (STOP-GAP) trial. Please do take a few moments to complete and return this questionnaire if you haven't already done so.

### 4. Funding bids submitted to the HTA

Two outline proposals were submitted for funding on behalf of the Network to the NHS Health Technology Assessment Board (HTA) in response to the recent open call for pragmatic trial proposals. These were for the bullous pemphigoid study (BPOP) and the pyoderma gangrenosum study (STOP-GAP). Unfortunately we were not successful on this occasion, but we shall submit these proposals to other funding bodies in the near future, and we shall also re-submit them to the HTA in September.

### 5. Evidence-based update meeting

The Centre of Evidence Based Dermatology in Nottingham held its annual update meeting in May. This year's topic was hair disorders and the format of the day, especially the expert panel session, continues to prove popular with delegates. The meeting was held at a new venue this year - Holywell Park, Loughborough - which is well located and has excellent facilities. The feedback received from delegates was very positive.



As in previous years, **proceeds** from the update meeting will be **donated to the UK Dermatology Clinical Trials Network**.

### 6. Dates for your diary

#### Network Meetings:

- **Monday 16 October 2006**  
13:00 – 15:30 - Steering Group  
15:45 – 17:00 - Executive Group only  
BAD House, London

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