DEXAmethasone versus placebo for patients with CELLulitis

The DEXACELL Trial - Study Summary

You are being invited to take part in a clinical research study. It is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve before deciding whether to take part. You are welcome to ask any questions and we will discuss the study fully with you.

The first 2 pages of this document summarise the study. The later pages provide more detail. You can also watch a video summarising this information on our website, via this QR code or link: https://sites.exeter.ac.uk/dexacell/participant-information/

Why is the research being done and why am I being invited to take part?

You are being invited to take part because you have attended hospital and have been diagnosed with cellulitis.

Cellulitis is a very common bacterial infection of the skin. It causes pain, swelling and can impact people's ability to complete normal tasks.

Patients with cellulitis are usually treated with antibiotics, pain killers and/or anti-inflammatory medicine. However, ongoing symptoms (particularly pain) can often lead to patients revisiting their doctor for further treatment.

We want to find out whether giving people with cellulitis an additional medicine (a 'corticosteroid' called dexamethasone) can:

- Reduce pain,
- Improve quality of life,
- Reduce additional healthcare appointments,
- Reduce the need for extra antibiotics and pain relief,
- Reduce costs.

What would taking part involve and how long will it take?

See the flowchart on page 3 for a summary of what's involved.

First, the study will be explained to you in full and you will have a chance to ask your medical team any questions you may have. On the next page is a flowchart summarising what is involved.

If you decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form, and complete some short questionnaires about your health. You will then be put into one of two groups in a random way (by chance):

- **Group 1** – 'Intervention' this group will be given a medicine called dexamethasone.
- **Group 2** – 'Comparator' this group will be given a placebo (a dummy pill that looks the same but contains no real medicine).

You will not know which group you are in or whether you have been given the dexamethasone or the placebo. You will be asked to complete some short questionnaires by SMS every 12 hours for 3 days. A member of the study team will then call you at 14-days and 90-days after joining the study to complete some questionnaires about your health.

Are there any risks or benefits to taking part?

Dexamethasone is a commonly used steroid, but it is not usually used to treat patients with cellulitis. We do not currently know whether taking dexamethasone on top of the usual treatments will help symptoms. The main benefit to taking part is to help us to see whether this new treatment works and potentially improve care for patients in the future.

Dexamethasone is generally a safe medicine that is commonly used for other illnesses. We are using it at a low dose in this study. The detailed participant information sheet (page 4 of this document onwards) explains the potential risks involved in taking part, including side effects of dexamethasone and the likelihood of you experiencing these. An extra information sheet will be provided to patients with diabetes, as there are extra things to consider when deciding if you want to take part.

How will my data be used?

In this research study we will use information from you and your medical records. We will only use information that we need for the research study. We will let very few people know your name or contact details, and only if they really need it for this study. Everyone involved in this study will keep your data safe and secure. We will also follow all privacy rules.

At the end of the study, we will save some of the data in case we need to check it and for future research. This will be stored for up to 10 years.

Information collected during the study will also be made indefinitely available to other researchers. It will not be possible to identify you personally from the information shared.

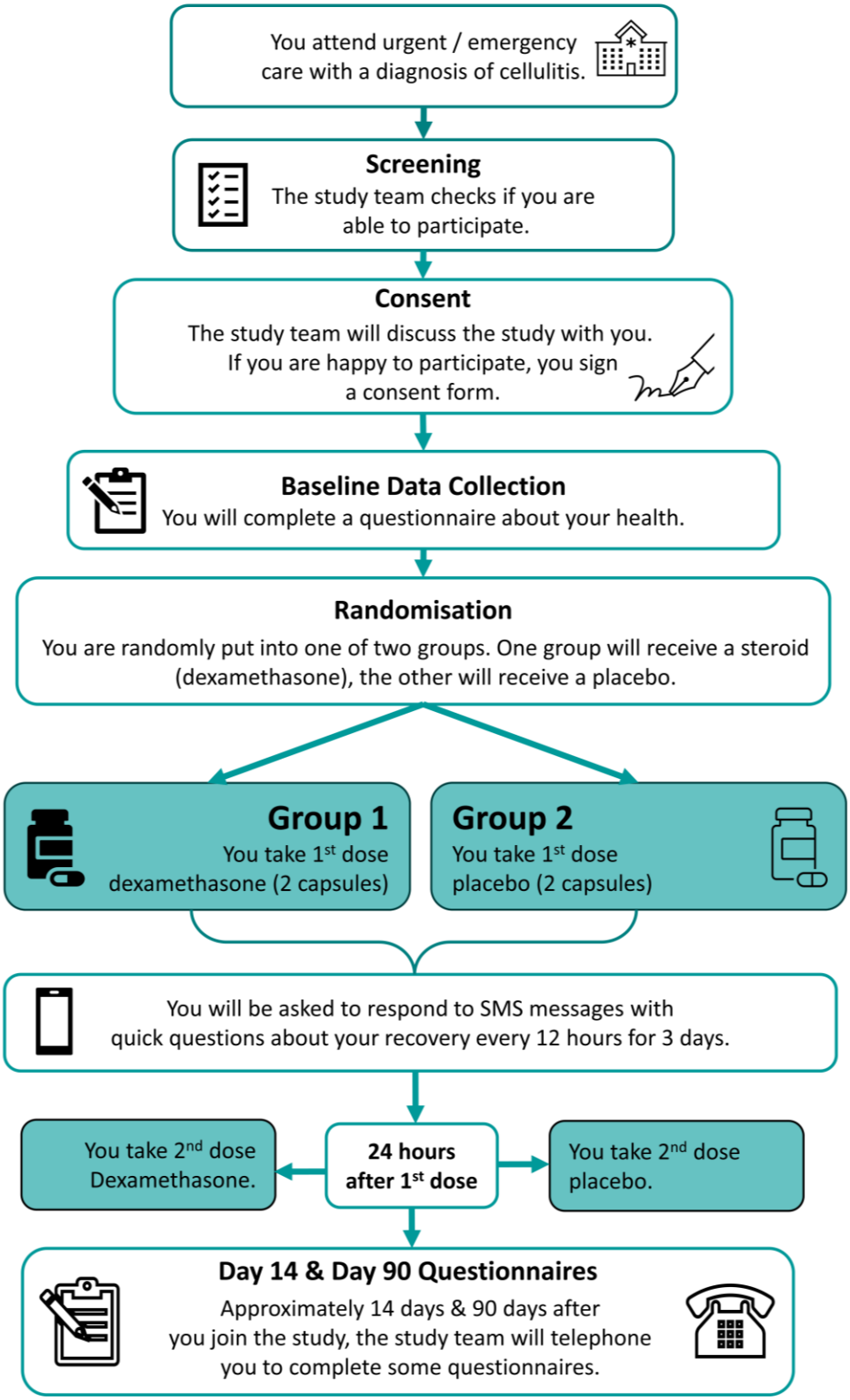
We will make sure no-one can work out who you are from the reports we write.

You can find out more about this on page 11-12.

Do I have to take part and if I do, can I withdraw from the study?

Taking part is completely voluntary and you can stop participating at any time without giving a reason. Your care will not be affected, and your treatment will continue as normal.

Study flowchart



DEXAmethasone versus placebo for patients with CELLulitis
The DEXACELL Trial - Participant Information Sheet

PART A: INFORMATION ABOUT TAKING PART IN THE DEXACELL TRIAL

Contact details

Local Principal Investigator

<Insert PI name>
<Insert PI contact details>
<Insert PI contact details>
<Insert PI contact details>
<Insert PI contact details>

Local research team

<Insert research nurse/coordinator name>
<Insert coordinator contact details>
<Insert coordinator contact details>
<Insert coordinator contact details>
<Insert coordinator contact details>

Coordinating centre

Exeter Clinical Trials Unit (ExeCTU)
University of Exeter
Email: DEXACELL@exeter.ac.uk

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study – The DEXACELL Trial

This study is being organised by North Bristol NHS Trust (the 'Sponsor') and managed day-to-day by Exeter Clinical Trials Unit at University of Exeter. <Insert site name> is one of many NHS sites that are working on this research study and inviting patients to participate.

Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done, and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

Taking part in research is voluntary; it is up to you to decide whether or not you would like to join the study and you will be given time to

make the decision. If you do participate, you are free to stop at any time.

If you choose not to take part, or decide later to stop participating in the study, you do not have to give any reason for your decision. The care you receive and your legal rights will not be affected.

One of the study team will go through this information sheet with you in person, explain the study in more detail, and answer any questions you may have. If anything is not clear, or you would like more information, please don't hesitate to ask. We encourage you to talk to others about the study if you wish, such as family of friends, and take time to decide.

Why is this study being done?

Cellulitis is a common infection of the skin. It can be serious (although this is rare) but often leads to pain, swelling, and a reduced ability to complete usual daily tasks.

When patients with cellulitis attend hospital they are usually treated with antibiotics and painkillers. However, even with this treatment around 1 in 5 patients will later seek further treatment due to ongoing symptoms - most often this is due to pain. This can lead to additional doctors appointments, A&E visits and additional antibiotics.

However, whilst antibiotics treat the underlying infection, they don't directly reduce swelling/inflammation and the related pain. It is therefore important to look for other ways to reduce early symptoms in patients with cellulitis, particularly pain.

There is a type of anti-inflammatory medicine called 'corticosteroids' that are often given to reduce inflammation and pain improving short-term symptoms in patients with other types of infection and many other conditions. They are not currently used for the treatment of cellulitis.

The DEXACELL Trial aims to find out whether giving a corticosteroid, called dexamethasone, in addition to usual care can reduce pain for patients with cellulitis. We will also look at whether giving dexamethasone can:

- Improve patients quality of life.
- Reduce any need for additional healthcare, antibiotics and/or pain relief.
- Be cost effective compared to usual care.

If we find that treating cellulitis with dexamethasone in addition to the usual antibiotics and painkillers is effective, this will lead to an improvement in care for future patients.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been given this information sheet because you have attended a participating hospital with cellulitis and you are aged 16 years or older.

The study team will check a few things in your medical record and may ask you some questions to find out if you are able to join the study (e.g. they will check any current medications you are taking and other medical conditions you might have).

If you have the potential to become pregnant, the team will need to confirm that you are not pregnant or breastfeeding and they will discuss with you whether you are willing to use contraception during your participation in the study.

We are aiming to recruit 450 people into the study from different NHS sites across the UK.

What will happen if I take part?

Consent

If the study team confirm you are eligible and you decide you would like to take part you will be asked to provide your written agreement to doing so, which we call your 'consent'. This will be taken electronically or on paper and you will be given a copy of the signed consent form to keep for your information. If you are unable to sign the form physically, you may consent verbally and a witness can sign the form on your behalf.

There are some optional items listed on the consent form which you do not have to say yes to in order to take part in the main study. These optional items include:

- Signing up to receive study newsletters/updates.
- Signing up to receive study results.
- Agreeing to be contacted about future research studies if you might be suitable for them.
- Agreeing for us to request extra data from your central NHS medical record if required for this research in future.

A copy of the completed consent form will be stored with your medical record, the study records and a copy sent securely to Exeter Clinical Trials Unit for monitoring. You will be given your own copy to take away.

If you agree to participate, we will give you a card with information about the study and the research teams contact details. You should always carry this with you while you are participating in the study. If you see a doctor while you are participating in the study, you

should show this to them so that they can treat you appropriately.

Randomisation & 'blinding'

As we sometimes don't know which way of treating patients is best, we need to compare different treatments. To help us understand whether giving dexamethasone is better than the current usual treatment you will be allocated in a random way (by chance) by a computer programme to receive either dexamethasone **OR** a placebo (a dummy pill that looks the same but contains no real medicine). This process is called randomisation.

Each person joining the study has the same chance of being in either group and nobody is able to choose your group for you. This ensures that the two groups are as similar as possible so that we can compare them fairly.

The two groups you could be put into by the computer are:

Intervention: Dexamethasone

- 2 capsules (8mg) taken after you are randomised.
- 2 capsules (8mg) taken 24 hours later.

Comparator: Placebo

- 2 capsules taken after you are randomised.
- 2 capsules taken 24 hours later.

The dexamethasone and placebo will look identical. Neither you or your doctors/nurses or the research team will know which group you were put into. This means we can make a fair assessment of which treatment option is better.

You should only agree to participate if you are happy to be in either group.

Treatment

No matter which group you are in, you will always receive the current usual treatment for your cellulitis, according to <insert site name>'s normal practice. This may include antibiotics, pain killers and hospital admission if your doctor thinks it is required.

Intervention: Dexamethasone

If you are in the intervention group, you will also receive two doses of dexamethasone which is a corticosteroid ("steroid"). Dexamethasone is a common medicine which is used widely for other conditions. It can be given orally (as a tablet), intravenously (injected) or topically (e.g. as a cream). In this study we will be using the oral type of dexamethasone.

Each dexamethasone dose will be made up of 2 capsules. Each capsule contains 4mg of dexamethasone giving a total of 8mg per dose.

You will be given your first dose shortly after you give consent and are randomised into the study. You will take your second dose 24 hours later. If you are still in the hospital 24 hours after your first dose, the study team will instruct you when to take the second dose. If you are sent home before this is due, you will be given the second dose to take away with instructions on when to take it.

Comparator: Placebo

If you are in the comparator group, you will receive two placebo doses. Each placebo dose will be made up of 2 capsules, which will look identical to the dexamethasone capsules, but will not contain any active medicine.

You will be given your first dose shortly after you give consent and are randomised into the study. You will take your second dose 24 hours later. If you are still in the hospital 24 hours after your first dose, the study team will instruct you when to take the second dose. If you are sent home before this is due, you will

be given the second dose to take home with instructions on when to take it.

Ingredients
Please note the dexamethasone and placebo capsules may contain the following ingredients; bovine gelatine, maize and/or potato starch, cellulose, propylene glycol, lactose and magnesium stearate. The capsules are Halal certified.

If you are concerned about any allergies or intolerance for any of these ingredients, please inform the study team.

Follow-up & Questionnaires

In person baseline questionnaires
We will ask you to complete some questionnaires as part of the study. The first of these will be completed after you sign the consent form, and before you are randomised into the study. This will include information about your current pain level, recent healthcare appointments, and your current quality of life. This will be used as a 'baseline' to compare to later.

SMS text message surveys
After you are randomised into the study and given your first dose of either dexamethasone or placebo we will begin sending you SMS messages to collect information about how you are recovering. These will come from the following phone number **07460 273 220**.

We will send you a short text message survey every 12 hours for the first 3 days (6 surveys in total). These will be sent/received at around 8am and 8pm each day. We will ask about your current pain level so that we can track your improvement over time.

It doesn't matter if you can't complete one of the surveys straight away, we can still use the data even if you respond later on.

The SMS surveys are the most important data for this research so that we can track whether dexamethasone reduces pain. Please try your best to respond to as many of these surveys as you can.

Your replies to the SMS surveys will be charged at your standard network rate (approximately 16 text messages in total).

If you don't manage to respond to one of the text surveys before the next comes, don't worry. Please just complete the next one when it comes and continue from there - this data will still be very useful for us.

If you are unable to receive or send SMS messages for any reason, please let the study team know when they discuss the study with you. It may be possible for the team to telephone you to gather this information instead.

Please note: if you do not complete 2 or more of your SMS surveys, the study team may telephone you to check whether the surveys are working as expected, and whether you are still happy to complete them.

Telephone calls may come from the study team at either <insert site name> or the lead NHS site North Bristol NHS Trust, depending on staff capacity.

Telephone questionnaires
At approximately 14 days and 90 days after you join the study the team will telephone you to complete a longer questionnaire and to gather information about your health including; a current pain rating, your impression of your recovery, quality of life and recent healthcare appointments. You will also be asked to tell us about any pain relief or antibiotics you used after joining the study.

When you join the study, we will provide you with a paper diary card to record information

you may need to remember during these telephone calls (e.g. antibiotics used and healthcare appointments). We will not collect these diary cards back in, they are for your personal use only.

What will happen at the end of the study?

Your participation in the study will be complete after your Day 90 follow-up call. If you have any ongoing concerns about your health, you should seek medical treatment via your GP as usual. You will not receive any further treatment as part of this study.

If you opt to receive study updates, we will send you newsletters at key points during the study either by post or email as preferred. These will be sent no more than every 6 months.

If you opt to receive your treatment allocation and study results, we will not be able to share these with you until the whole study is complete. This may be 2 years or longer if you are one of the earlier participants to join the study. This is because the research team will not know which treatment you received until after the study is complete and the data have been analysed.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There are no direct benefits from taking part in the study as we do not know whether receiving dexamethasone will work for treating cellulitis. However, you will be contributing to research which may improve medical care for others in the future.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Dexamethasone is widely used for a number of illnesses, including those caused by infection, but like all medicines it does have some possible side effects. In this study we are using low doses of dexamethasone for a short period of time, compared to the doses used for some other conditions so any side effects are likely to be relatively mild. We expect the dexamethasone to be active shortly after taking it and to wash out of your system within a few days, so we expect if you encounter any side effects these will also last for a few days. However, please see below for a list of possible side effects to look out for, and how common they are.

Most people don't get serious side effects but the ones listed below are possible:

Very common – common

- Mood changes
- Difficulty sleeping, confusion, agitation (nervousness)
- Skin rashes
- Stomach/intestine problems (nausea, diarrhoea, pain)
- Higher blood sugars – only relevant for patients with diabetes
- Headaches
- Changes in menstrual periods

Uncommon but important

- Depression, suicidal thoughts, or feeling 'high' (sometimes causing unusual behaviour) – these conditions can happen within days of starting treatment
- Stomach/intestine problems (ulcers or bleeding)
- Allergic reactions

Diabetic patients

We have a separate information sheet for diabetic patients who have been invited to take part in the study as there are some extra things to think about due to the potential impact on blood sugars. If you are diabetic and have not already received this, please request one from your doctor/nurse.

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

It is possible that if the treatment is given to a pregnant person, it could cause harm to the unborn child. Pregnant people will therefore not be eligible to take part in this study, neither will anyone who is unwilling to use contraception while participating in the study.

If a pregnancy occurs during participation in the study, you should inform the study team using the contact details on page 3 of this document.

People who are breastfeeding are not eligible to participate in this trial as dexamethasone can pass into breast milk.

We will collect information of all risks and side effects experienced by participants in this study and these will be reported to an independent committee for review.

What alternatives are there to taking part in the study?

If you decide not to take part in the research study, you will not need to give a reason and you will receive the usual treatment for your condition as per normal practice.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

You can stop being part of the study at any time, without giving a reason, but we will keep information about you that we already have.

We may ask you for a reason, to help us design better studies for the future but it is up to you whether you are happy to supply a reason or not. Your decision to stop being part of the study will not impact your medical care or your rights. Your doctor will decide the best treatment plan for you.

You may still be happy to continue completing the SMS text surveys and follow-up telephone calls with the study team, this will be confirmed with you when you inform the team that you would like to change your participation in the study.

If you choose to stop taking part in the study, we would like to continue collecting information about your health from your hospital records, as relevant for this research. If you do not want this to happen, tell us and we will stop.

Will I receive any expenses?

As responding to the SMS surveys will be charged at your standard network rate, and to acknowledge time taken to participate in the study, you will be offered a supermarket voucher (or equivalent). If you do not want a voucher, you can decline this.

There are no travel expenses available for taking part in this study as you won't be asked to make any visits in addition to your usual care at the hospital.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the study will be sent out to participants who opted into this, reported in medical journals, shared via our study website and social media and presented at relevant meetings or conferences.

Insurance

It is unlikely that any medical insurance would be affected by taking part in this study, but you should consider this before taking part and seek advice if necessary.

Who is organising and reviewing the study?

North Bristol NHS Trust is the 'Sponsor' of DEXACELL, which means they have overall responsibility for the study.

The study is being organised and run day-to-day on their behalf by Exeter Clinical Trials Unit (ExeCTU), at University of Exeter. Dr Edward Carlton is the Chief Investigator overseeing the trial. Some of the core study team who will help to run the study (including Dr Carlton) work at University of Bristol.

DEXACELL is funded by the National Institute for Health and Social Care Research – Health Technology Assessment Programme (funders ID: NIHR153216).

All research run in the NHS is reviewed by a Research Ethics Committee. They review the research to ensure your safety, wellbeing and rights are protected. This study was reviewed and approved by South Central – Oxford B Research Ethics Committee.

What if there is a problem or I have a complaint?

If you have concerns or questions about the way this study is conducted and how you have been treated this will be taken seriously and will not impact your treatment in any way.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact your study doctor or the research team using the contact details on page 3 of this document. They will be happy to discuss your concerns and do their best to answer your questions.

If you wish to make a complaint or have concerns about the way you have been treated during your participation in this study, you can do this through the usual NHS complaints procedure. You can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) in the first instance:
<Insert local PALS details>

To make a formal complaint please write to:
<Insert details>

In the unlikely event that something does go wrong, and you are harmed during the research study there are no special compensation arrangements. The normal National Health Service complaints mechanisms will still be available to you. If you are harmed and this is due to someone's negligence, you may have grounds for a legal action for compensation, but you may have to pay your legal costs.

Further information

You can obtain further information about DEXACELL on our website. The website contains an information video which summarises the information in this leaflet, as well as other study information and updates: https://sites.exeter.ac.uk/dexacell/

You can also follow us on:
X (formerly Twitter) @DEXACELL_Trial

You can obtain **general information on clinical research** from the UK Clinical Research Collaboration (UKCRC) who produce a booklet called "Understanding Clinical Trials". This provides in-depth information on the design and conduct of clinical trials and aims to answer the questions of those considering taking part.

Electronic copies can be downloaded from the UKCRC website: https://www.ukcrc.org/public-awareness-of-clinical-research/information-resources-on-clinical-research/

PART B: INFORMATION ABOUT HOW WE WILL USE YOUR DATA

How will you use information about me?

We will need to use information from you, and from your medical records for this research project. This information will include your:

- Name
- Initials
- Date of birth
- Contact details
- <NHS number/CHI number>

People will use this information to do the research or to check your records to make sure that the research is being done properly.

People who do not need to know who you are will not be able to see your name or contact details. Your data will have a code number instead.

We will keep all information about you safe and secure.

Some of your information will be sent to United States. They must follow our rules about keeping your information safe.

Our text messaging service provider (Twilio) are based in the United States. They will receive and use your mobile number to send you text messages. The messages they send will be for the purposes of this research only and they will not share your information with anyone else. Once your participation has ended you will no longer be contacted by text message and Twilio will not retain the data.

Once we have finished the study, we will keep some of the data so we can check the results. We will write our reports in a way that no-one can work out that you took part in the study.

Information collected during the study will be made available indefinitely to other researchers. This information will be de-identified so it will not be possible to identify you personally from any information shared.

What are my choices about how my information is used?

You can stop being part of the study at any time, without giving a reason, but we will keep information about you that we already have.

We need to manage your records in specific ways for the research to be reliable. This means that we won't be able to let you see or change the data we hold about you.

With your permission we may also collect some data about you from your main NHS medical record if needed for this research in the future (e.g. to check if your cellulitis comes back in the long-term). This is optional and you can opt out on the consent form. If you do opt in it could provide added value to this research without us needing to contact you directly for additional information. We would share your information (minimum date of birth and NHS/CHI number) with the relevant health service depending on where you live - NHS England, NHS Wales Informatics Service or Information Services Division (ISD) Scotland who manage the NHS medical records. They would return only the minimum data required for the research. If you consent to this but later change your mind, please tell us and we will stop.

Where can you find out more about how your information is used?

You can find out more about how we use your information:

- at www.hra.nhs.uk/information-about-patients/
- our leaflet available from www.hra.nhs.uk/patientdataandresearch
- by asking one of the research team
- by sending an email to Helen Williamson (Head of Information Governance at North Bristol NHS Trust) helen.williamson2@nbt.nhs.uk, or
- by ringing Helen Williamson on 0117 4144767.

Thank you for taking the time to read this leaflet and considering taking part in our study.

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