

## What is Clinical Research?

Clinical research helps us to understand how to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent disease.

The main aims of clinical research are to:

- Provide the best advice and treatments for patients
- Share knowledge and learning
- Increase understanding of health and disease
- Improve patient care

One aspect of clinical research is a clinical trial.

## What is a Clinical Trial?

Before being used in clinical practice, new treatments must be very carefully tested so that the effects on patients can be more fully understood.

Clinical trials using volunteers are the best way to assess whether new treatments are safe, what the side effects could be and if they are more effective than existing treatments.

Clinical trials show the risks and benefits of interventions or treatments such as surgery, medicines or radiotherapy by comparing them with the current standard treatment or a dummy drug ie a 'placebo'. The treatments are given to patients or healthy volunteers with their full consent and the researchers then observe and record any differences in effects over time.

## What is the UK DCTN?

The UK Dermatology Clinical Trials Network (UK DCTN) is open to anyone (medical staff and patients/carers) with an interest in dermatology research. Established in 2002 by Professor Hywel Williams of the University of Nottingham (pictured below), the aim of the Network is to conduct clinical trials for the treatment or prevention of skin disease that are independent of the pharmaceutical industry.



Prof Hywel Williams  
Chair UK DCTN

Funded by the Department of Health, the Network has over 300 members across the UK and Eire.

## Why it's important to get involved

To most people, getting involved means taking part in a study, and this is extremely important to us.

But, there are other forms of active involvement in the UK DCTN that are equally valuable to us such as :

- helping to identify research areas that are relevant and important
- helping to design research studies
- assisting with interpreting research results
- promoting the good work of the UK DCTN.

## How does patient and public involvement benefit the UK DCTN?

Having patients and carers involved helps us:

- Answer the research questions that are relevant to patients
- Share research news with patients and the public
- Keep our research on track

## How do you benefit from being actively involved in the UK DCTN?

Getting involved will help us to help you:

- Have your say in dermatology research
- Share your experiences in a positive way
- Learn more about research by attending relevant free training courses
- Gain new skills
- Have the chance to make a contribution

## How you can get involved

This really could not be simpler. Just contact the Network Manager (details overleaf) and discuss how you would like to become more involved. Don't worry, you don't need to have any experience of research at all. Our website [www.ukdctn.org](http://www.ukdctn.org) has more information, including details of our ongoing and developing clinical trials.

## The UK DCTN and Me...

by Maxine Whitton



I have had vitiligo for more than 50 years. My interest in research led me to become a consumer member of the Cochrane Skin Group (CSG). When Hywel Williams invited me to sit on the Steering and Executive Committees of the UK DCTN I felt this was a wonderful opportunity to contribute to the process of designing and conducting trials into skin diseases, like vitiligo. I am not a scientist or a doctor, but I bring my experience and perspective as a member of the public and as a person who has a skin disease. My contribution, however small, is valued.

Fifteen years ago I never dreamt I could play such an important role in research. If you care about skin diseases and their treatment, join the UK DCTN. All you need is time, enthusiasm, a willingness to learn and a real desire to be involved in research.



To find out how to get more involved in the UK DCTN please contact :

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If you would like more information on public involvement in clinical research then it is a good idea to contact INVOLVE. This is a national group that promotes public involvement in the NHS, public health and social care research. Visit the website [www.invo.org.uk](http://www.invo.org.uk) or tel 023 8065 1088

## Getting involved in the UK DCTN



### Who is this leaflet for?

- Patients
- Carers
- Members of the public

### This leaflet tells you:

- What clinical research is
- What the UK DCTN is
- Why it's important to get involved
- How you can get involved

[www.ukdctn.org](http://www.ukdctn.org)