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UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

epic

EPIC-NORFOLK NEWSLETTER
Website: www.epic-norfolk.org.uk

8000 Participants have an EPIC health check!

Since 2004, the EPIC clinic at the Norwich Community Hospital has seen over 8,000 participants as part of the latest phase of EPIC – the Third Health Check (3HC). We have now achieved our original objectives for this latest phase and therefore the 3HC, as it stands, will finish at the end of 2011.

We continue to be constantly amazed by the dedication of our participants in attending the clinic. At 3 hours, this is a much longer appointment than before, but the many positive comments received from those who have attended reflect the enjoyment the majority of people experience whilst with us. Our thanks therefore go to all those who have made the 3HC such a huge success. **Thank you!**

Updates

Cambridge Science Festival 2011

On Saturday March 19th, EPIC-Norfolk hosted an interactive exhibition as part of the 2011 Cambridge Science Festival. The principle intention of this exhibition was to provide dietary education and information – with special focus on the essential nutrients of Fibre and Vitamin C – in a way that created enjoyment and excited the interest of those partaking. Armed with glitz and glamour, we adapted and brought several iconic and cherished British game shows to life, including 'Play Your Nutritional Cards Right' and 'The EPIC Supermarket Sweep'. The exhibition was incredibly successful – we calculated that we had in excess of 600 visitors during our allocated 6 hour slot – and really vitalized and animated several of our scientific findings.

Annually, EPIC-Norfolk also hosts an interactive stand within The Forum, in Norwich. This location allows us direct and efficient local interaction with our participant base. This year, our stand – 'The Nutrition Games' – was once again very popular with all ages, making the day rewarding to all who participated. We would therefore like to thank those of you who visited the stand and supported it.

The EPIC-Norfolk Cambridge Science Festival Team, 2011. ***(Photograph taken following a long, but fun-filled day!)***

Diffusion Tensor Imaging (DTI) Study

The pilot study is now complete with 68 participants having taken part. The aim of this study was to look at the feasibility of conducting a larger-scaled study, which will investigate the differences between normal ageing and future cognitive decline. Currently, the data is being cleaned and the results and findings from this preliminary study are to be published later in the year.

EPIC Participant Advisory Panel (EPAP)

EPAP recently celebrated its first anniversary and has so far enjoyed a very successful and productive term. The panel has had a direct input into questionnaire layouts, public engagement activities and the methods used to disseminate results and information, whilst providing invaluable opinions on the desired direction of research, especially in relation to intervention studies and collaborations with other investigators. The next EPAP meeting will be held in November; so, if you are an EPIC participant and interested in becoming a member of the panel, please contact the EPIC Local Research Coordinator Nichola Dalzell on 01603 218165, or email nichola.dalzell@nnuh.nhs.uk.

Ongoing data analysis

The data gathered by EPIC-Norfolk has been used to publish hundreds of scientific papers, all of which can be accessed on our website: www.epic-norfolk.org.uk . These papers highlight various associations between lifestyle and health, to enhance understanding of diseases, disease risk factors and disease prevention. Below are several summaries of our current data uses, written by researchers working on the data collected during the 3rd Health Check.

Anthony Khawaja MA, MB, BS, MRCOphth

I am currently analysing data from the eye examinations and the cognitive testing (including the test of having to remember which box on the computer screen the different patterns were in). During the eye examinations, some very detailed measurements of the retina and nerve at the back of the eye were made. I am looking at whether these precise measurements are related to how well each person scores on the cognitive tests. If there is an association, this could be exciting, as it may mean a whole new way we can measure a person's cognitive function.

Sara Ahmadi MD, MPhil

I am looking at the systemic markers (markers relating to the whole body, as opposed to localised factors) of inflammation, and how they are involved in predicting the risk of chronic diseases (such as cardiovascular diseases, lung conditions, cancer, etc). This will hopefully help better understand how such diseases develop. Identifying such risk factors will help to better target screening, prevention, and therapeutic interventions.

Michelle Chan BSc, MBBS, MRCOphth
MRC Clinical Research Fellow, Institute of Ophthalmology

Glaucoma is an eye condition which is the most common cause of irreversible blindness in the world. Usually it does not produce any symptoms until the disease is advanced, but some abnormalities are detectable in the eye from an early stage. I will be analysing the eye & visual function data to see which combination of tests will be best at screening for glaucoma. The results could allow more people with glaucoma to be diagnosed at an earlier stage, thereby preserving their vision and their quality of life.

Dr. Victoria Keevil MA, BMBCh, MRCP
Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Fellow

I am interested in understanding more about the physiological processes involved in ageing. One of the most common observations is the loss of muscle mass and strength with advancing age. Hand grip strength, a marker of general muscle strength, has been measured at the 3HC and preliminary investigations indicate that grip strength is strongly associated with gender, age and past physical activity level. The data collected within the EPIC-Norfolk study will allow exploration of nutritional and lifestyle factors which influence muscle strength in later life. This will help us understand more about the physiology of muscle and how to maintain strong and healthy muscles in later life.

Future Newsletters

We would really welcome your input. If there is anything in particular that you would like us to report on, please contact our team with your suggestions and queries.

Furthermore, if you are an EPIC participant and wish to receive any additional newsletters direct to an email account, please ring the EPIC team (**01223 740170**) to register your details or go onto our website at www.epic-nofolk.org.uk.