



EPIC-NORFOLK NEWSLETTER

UPDATE

As our dedicated participants, you will know that EPIC-Norfolk has been running since 1993 when we first invited you to take part in this very important project. Over 30,000 people completed a questionnaire, 25,000 attended the first health check, and over 15,000 attended the second health check (1998-2000). We have also collected over 55,000 seven day food diaries completed by you at different time points throughout the study. Although our initial aim was to look at links between diet, lifestyle and the occurrence of cancer, the remit of the study was widened almost from the start to include other chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and later on, osteoporosis.

Third Health check (2006-2010)

Since 2006, we have been inviting our participants for the third health check. We are now also interested in looking at aspects of healthy ageing to understand why some people are fit and healthy when they get older and others are not.

Studies show that we are living longer with improvement of living conditions and medical treatment. However, it is also important to have a better quality of life and that we are able to live independently for as long as we can. At this health check we are repeating measures taken at previous health checks to observe changes that have occurred over the years and we have added new measures to look at memory and physical function in detail as well as a comprehensive eye examination to study visual health. All of these are affected as we get older and can have a huge impact on our health and well-being.

There have been over 100 papers published in 2009 by EPIC-Norfolk and the wider European study. Further details of all publications and abstracts are listed on our website. Below are two key findings from 2009.

No evidence that social stress is associated with breast cancer

It is a common misconception that stress may be a factor in the cause of breast cancer in women. We conducted a comprehensive study on 11,467 women with no prior history of breast cancer, and questioned them on difficult circumstances during childhood and longer-term difficulties in adulthood and ability to adapt to stress and stressful life events. Our findings suggest that there is **no** evidence that social stress or individual differences in a person's experiences are associated with the development of breast cancer. The authors of this paper suggested that these findings should be used to help meet the emotional needs of breast cancer survivors in a positive way by reassuring women that their experiences of stress are not contributory causes of their disease.

Public Engagement Activities in 2009

14th March – **Cambridge Science Festival** Hands-on activities for all the family

18th May – **Wroxham and Hoveton Rotary Club**
Presentation and update on EPIC-Norfolk

13th June – **Cambridge Town, Gown and Country Show** Fun activities for children of all ages

5th August – **Dementia Focus Group, Norwich** Presentation on EPIC-Norfolk research into cognition

15th October – **Broadlands Older People's Partnership**
Presentation and update on research activities

18th November – **Palliative Care Conference, Norwich** Poster Presentation and stall on current research activities

15th December – **Patient and Public Involvement in Research**
Presentation on research activities and participant involvement in the EPIC-Norfolk project

Healthy Fat linked to bowel disease

Using dietary data from food frequency questionnaires 203,193 men and women aged 30-74 years from the EPIC-Norfolk and the wider European study, our researchers have shown that high intake of linoleic acid, found in foods like "healthy" margarines, may be implicated in a third of ulcerative colitis cases. The data indicates that there may be a role for dietary linoleic acid in the cause of ulcerative colitis and so a high intake of polyunsaturated fat in the diet, while good for the heart, may lead to inflammatory bowel disease. The researchers also found that a diet rich in another type of fat, omega 3 fatty acid found in oily fish such as salmon and herring, reduced the likelihood of developing ulcerative colitis by 77%.

For the full papers please refer to:

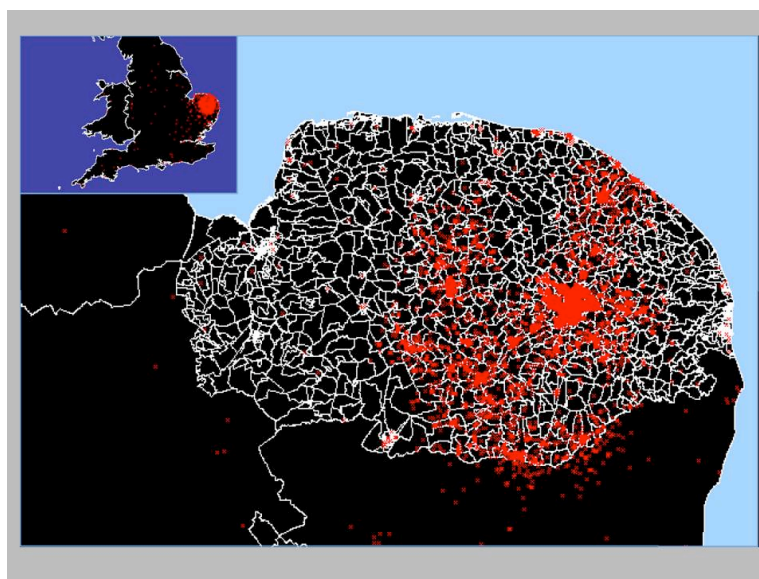
Paul G. Surtees, Nicholas W. J. Wainwright, Robert N. Luben, Kay-Tee Khaw and

Sheila A. Bingham: No evidence that social stress is associated with breast cancer incidence. Breast Cancer Research and Treatment, Published online: 2 July 2009.

Andrew R Hart: Linoleic Acid, a Dietary N-6 Polyunsaturated Fatty Acid, and the Aetiology of Ulcerative Colitis - A European Prospective Cohort Study. Gut, Published online: July 2009

Current recruitment

We have recruited from the following areas in Norfolk. We will continue to invite all our participants until 2010. Map showing recruitment (by area) to the 3HC. (Each dot represents one EPIC participant.)



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

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We would like to **THANK ALL EPIC PARTICIPANTS** for taking part in our study. We are immensely grateful to you for the time and effort you have dedicated to take part in this important project, which would have not been possible without your help.