



# NEWS RELEASE

IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 17 July 2015

## Southampton dementia researchers in call for more volunteers

Researchers in Southampton are urging more people in the region to consider volunteering for dementia studies. Many pioneering studies into the devastating condition are underway in the region, but efforts can be hampered if researchers can't find people willing to take part. In February 2015, a new national service called Join Dementia Research launched to help members of the public with and without dementia register their interest in participating in research. Dr Jay Amin and his colleagues at the University of Southampton are urging more people in the area to consider signing up.

Join Dementia Research ([www.joindementiaresearch.nihr.ac.uk](http://www.joindementiaresearch.nihr.ac.uk)) is funded by the Department of Health and delivered by the National Institute of Health Research in partnership with Alzheimer's Research UK, Alzheimer's Society and Alzheimer Scotland. The online and telephone service is the first of its kind in the UK and aims to provide an opportunity for those with dementia and their friends and family to get involved in pioneering research, as well as streamlining the recruitment process for researchers. By signing up, volunteers agree to be contacted to take part in new studies getting underway in their area, from which point they can decide if they wish to take part.

There are currently 42 research studies looking for volunteers through Join Dementia Research, including five studies running in the Southampton and Bournemouth areas and more being set up. These include several clinical trials of potential new treatments for Alzheimer's, as well as a study looking into how to support people with dementia to live well with their condition.

Dr Jay Amin, an Alzheimer's Research UK Clinical Research Fellow at the University of Southampton, is looking for volunteers with and without dementia for a study just getting underway in the region. The study will look at the role of inflammation in the brain in two forms of dementia – Alzheimer's disease and dementia with Lewy bodies compared to levels in the brains of healthy over 50s. The participants will be asked to take memory tests and provide a blood sample in a one-off two-hour visit to the clinic. The team are particularly keen to hear from people with dementia with Lewy bodies who may be willing to take part. The study is called SILAD (Systemic inflammation in Dementia with Lewy Bodies and Alzheimer's Disease).

He said: "Research is helping us to learn more than ever about what happens in the brain in the diseases that cause dementia, but there are still key unanswered questions we need to tackle. Our study will use blood samples donated by volunteers to search for molecular signatures in blood that could help to accurately detect Alzheimer's and dementia with Lewy bodies. We hope our findings could provide valuable insight into these diseases as well as form the basis for future work to develop blood tests that could help to streamline research and clinical assessment.

"There is so much pioneering research taking place in this region and Join Dementia Research is a really important resource to help us move forward more quickly. The more we can spread the word about Join Dementia Research the more everyone – researchers and people with dementia – will be able to benefit."

Join Dementia Research allows anyone with and without memory problems to sign-up using basic demographic and health information and be matched to studies in their area. Research teams whose studies are recruiting using Join Dementia Research can then approach them about their particular study and the volunteer can decide whether to take part on a case-by-case basis.

It's also possible to register on behalf of someone who may not be able to register themselves, acting as a representative. This allows people to sign up those who may need assistance using the system or may have dementia themselves and benefit from a helping hand.

John Spencer from Christchurch was motivated to sign up to Join Dementia Research after his wife Maura was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's. He said:  
"Maura was so open and positive in the face of her diagnosis and got involved in research herself in Southampton, which gave us both great pride that she was doing something to help others. Just before Maura died, I got involved in a study as a healthy volunteer and took some memory tests and gave blood and saliva samples. Alzheimer's and other dementias are heartbreaking but research has the potential to change lives, if enough willing volunteers can be found. I found the experience friendly and encouraging and am keen to be involved in even more studies in the future."

People with and without dementia can sign up online at [www.joindementiaresearch.nihr.ac.uk](http://www.joindementiaresearch.nihr.ac.uk) or contact one of the charity helplines: Alzheimer's Research UK (0300 111 5 111) or Alzheimer's Society (0300 222 1122).

## Ends

For film and interview opportunities please contact Laura Phipps, Press Office (Alzheimer's Research UK): 0300 111 5 666 mobile: 07500803936.

## Notes to Editors

### Facts about dementia

- Dementia is used to describe a group of symptoms including memory loss, confusion, mood changes and difficulty with day-to-day tasks.
- Every 3.2 minutes someone in the UK develops dementia, and the number of people affected is predicted to double in the next 30 years.
- Dementia is caused by brain diseases, with Alzheimer's disease accounting for around two thirds of cases.
- One person will develop dementia every three minutes.
- Dementia costs the UK over £26 billion a year.
- There is no cure for Alzheimer's disease. Delaying the onset of dementia by five years would cut by a third the number of people affected by dementia.

### About the NIHR

The [National Institute for Health Research \(NIHR\)](http://www.nihr.ac.uk) is funded by the Department of Health to improve the health and wealth of the nation through research.

Since its establishment in April 2006, the NIHR has transformed research in the NHS. It has:

- increased the volume of applied health research for the benefit of patients and the public
- driven faster translation of basic science discoveries into tangible benefits for patients and the economy
- developed and supported the people who conduct and contribute to applied health research.

The NIHR plays a key role in the Government's strategy for economic growth, attracting investment by the life-sciences industries through its world-class infrastructure for health research.

Together, the NIHR people, programmes, centres of excellence and systems represent the most integrated health research system in the world.

**About Alzheimer's Research UK**

Source: <http://www.alzheimersresearchuk.org/>

Alzheimer's Research UK is the UK's leading dementia research charity specialising in finding preventions, causes, treatments and a cure for dementia. For more information about dementia research, contact the Dementia Research Infoline on 0300 111 5 111.

**About Alzheimer's Society**

Source: <http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/>

Alzheimer's Society supports people to live well with dementia today and funds research to find a cure for tomorrow. We rely on voluntary donations to continue our vital work. You can donate now by calling 0845 306 0898 or visiting [alzheimers.org.uk](http://alzheimers.org.uk)

**About Alzheimer Scotland**

Source: <http://www.alzscot.org/>

Alzheimer Scotland helps people with dementia, their carers and families. Our members include carers, relatives, people with dementia, professionals, groups and organisations.

**About the University of Southampton**

Through world-leading research and enterprise activities, the University of Southampton connects with businesses to create real-world solutions to global issues. Through its educational offering, it works with partners around the world to offer relevant, flexible education, which trains students for jobs not even thought of. This connectivity is what sets Southampton apart from the rest; we make connections and change the world. <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/>