

**PRESS NOTICE – EMBARGO: TUESDAY 19 JULY 00:01**

## **Number of Alzheimer’s clinical trials almost doubles in 3 years - Volunteers needed for innovative dementia trials opening in the UK**

According to latest figures, the number of drug trials to treat Alzheimer’s disease across the globe has almost doubled since 2013<sup>1</sup>. In the UK, there are now 19 drug studies investigating potential new treatments for Alzheimer’s and other dementias<sup>2</sup>, testing treatments that aim to be the first to slow or stop the progression of the disease.

With no new drugs to treat dementia in over a decade and an estimated 850,000 people in the UK currently living with dementia, research into medicines that can potentially delay progression of the condition is much needed. **The increase in new trials means that researchers are urgently seeking more people with memory problems to take part.**

**Join Dementia Research**, is an innovative service accelerating this vital research by finding suitable study participants. Join Dementia Research is looking for more volunteers with dementia to register, but also people without dementia who are experiencing early memory problems. Changes in the brain in diseases like Alzheimer’s can start many years before symptoms show, so studying people with mild memory problems gives researchers the best chance of understanding how dementia develops and finding ways to stop it.

**Anyone interested in volunteering for dementia research can sign up to Join Dementia Research online at [www.joindementiaresearch.nihr.ac.uk](http://www.joindementiaresearch.nihr.ac.uk)**

The latest drug study to be added to Join Dementia Research is called ENGAGE, from Biogen Inc. This international study is looking to determine whether a new investigational medication, Aducanumab, can slow progression of early Alzheimer’s disease and also whether it’s safe to use in patients. This phase III study is now looking for more volunteers. Sites are opening across England and Scotland and researchers are looking for volunteers aged 50-85 and those who are experiencing problems with memory or thinking may be eligible to take part. Participation will involve one or two site visits each month and telephone interviews for up to four years. The study will include questionnaires and interviews, physical examinations, MRI and PET scans, and other tests to monitor health.

Professor Craig Ritchie is Professor of the Psychiatry of Ageing at the University of Edinburgh and Chief Investigator in the ENGAGE study. He said:

“Dementia research is critically important, not least because of the huge number of people it affects. Although we have some drugs that manage some of the symptoms of dementia, we have a long way to go in terms of modifying the course of the disease. However, only by conducting high quality research will we be able to get conclusive evidence and move treatments forward. To do this research we’re relying on people who are experiencing the very earliest stages of memory problems to come forward and offer to take part.”

Other studies recruiting through Join Dementia Research include:

- The Amaranth study, testing whether a new drug can slow progression of Alzheimer's disease by slowing the production of beta-amyloid, a protein known to build up in the brain in the disease. The trial involves a one-a-day tablet to be taken over two years, as well as various tests and assessments monitoring health throughout the period. The study is looking for people aged 55-85 with early stages of Alzheimer's disease.
- The RADAR trial (Reducing pathology in Alzheimer's Disease through Angiotensin taRgeting), is looking at whether losartan, a commonly-used treatment for high blood pressure (hypertension), could also be effective at slowing progression of Alzheimer's disease. The researchers believe losartan can slow down the progression of Alzheimer's disease by improving brain blood flow and altering chemical pathways that cause brain cell damage, brain shrinkage and memory problems in Alzheimer's disease. Participation involves taking the drug once a day for 14 months, with 9 site or home visits. The study is looking for people 55+, with and without hypertension or high blood pressure, but with a diagnosis of Alzheimer's in England and Scotland.

Join Dementia Research is a nationwide online and telephone service that makes it easier for people to register their interest in volunteering for vital dementia research studies. It is open to anyone over the age of 18 and people can act as a representative to register a loved one, including someone who has dementia who may find it difficult to register themselves or manage their own account. To date, 19,711 people have registered, and 5,498 taken part in research studies. Despite this, more people with dementia and memory problems are being asked to come forward.

Wendy Mitchell, who has young onset dementia, is taking part in research, including a drug trial aiming to determine whether an antibiotic is effective in reducing the rate of cognitive and functional decline. Wendy said:

“There currently is no cure and without willing volunteers to try out new drugs there will continue to be no cure. Taking part in research is my way of feeling useful again and contributing to finding that elusive treatment which in turn will create a better world for my children.”

Dr Simon Ridley, Director of Research at Alzheimer's Research UK, said:

“Clinical trials are an essential part of delivering any new treatment to patients and volunteers are essential for these important studies to get off the ground. It's promising to see so many new clinical trials for potential new dementia treatments starting in the UK, but the challenge now is to support those with Alzheimer's and other dementias to take part.

“Many of the current trials are testing treatments in those at risk of diseases like Alzheimer's, or those experiencing early symptoms, as researchers believe the drugs are most likely to have the biggest effect when given early. Anyone who is experiencing memory problems or has a diagnosis of dementia should be given the opportunity to take part in research as early as possible and Join Dementia Research provides a mechanism to do that.”

Dr Doug Brown, Director of Research and Development at Alzheimer's Society, said:

“222,000 people will develop dementia this year alone – that’s one person every three minutes. The development of treatments that can slow or halt the progression of the condition will undoubtedly mark a turning point in the way dementia is managed, but this can’t be done without people who have memory and thinking problems, or early-stage dementia, to help test these potential new treatments.

“We’re now making much-needed advancements in our understanding of what goes wrong in the brain when dementia develops and how to tackle it. Delaying the onset of dementia by just five years would significantly reduce the number of deaths from the condition, saving 30,000 lives a year and giving hope to countless more.”

**Anyone interested in volunteering for dementia research can sign up to Join Dementia Research online at [www.joindementiaresearch.nihr.ac.uk](http://www.joindementiaresearch.nihr.ac.uk) or by contacting the charity helplines: Alzheimer Scotland 0808 808 3000, Alzheimer’s Research UK 0300 111 5 111, or Alzheimer’s Society 0300 222 1122.**

#### **Notes to editors**

For further information (including interview opportunities with case studies and researchers recruiting to studies using Join Dementia Research) please contact Hannah Saunders, 020 3328 6742.

1. Search conducted on [clinicaltrials.gov](http://clinicaltrials.gov) on 15 July 2016, showed 194 open trials (Search criteria - Interventional (drug) studies phase 1-3, with ongoing (not unknown) status). Comparison to search on 8 July 2013, which showed 99 trials, cited in Alzheimer’s Society Dementia 2014 report, page 47 [https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/download\\_info.php?fileID=2317](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/download_info.php?fileID=2317)

2. Search conducted on [clinicaltrials.gov](http://clinicaltrials.gov) on 15 July 2016, showed 19 open trials (Search criteria - Interventional (drug) studies phase 1-3, with ongoing (not unknown) status, in the United Kingdom).

#### **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 service**

- Join Dementia Research is funded by the Department of Health and delivered in partnership with the National Institute for Health Research, Alzheimer Scotland, Alzheimer's Research UK and Alzheimer's Society.
- By entering basic demographic and health information, Join Dementia Research matches members of the public to new studies, making it easier to volunteer to participate in pioneering research, as well as streamlining the recruitment process for researchers.

- By signing up to the service, people give permission for researchers to contact them with details of studies in their area that match their profile. People can then decide if they would like to participate in those studies on a case-by-case basis and can opt-out at any time.
- Anyone aged 18+, with and without memory problems, can register. It's also possible to register on behalf of someone who may not be able to register themselves, acting as a representative.

### **Study funders**

- The ENGAGE study is funded by Biogen Inc
- The Amaranth study is funded by Eli Lilly & Co
- The RADAR trial is funded by National Institute for Health Research

### **About the NIHR**

The [National Institute for Health Research \(NIHR\)](#) 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 is Scotland's leading dementia organisation, providing care, activities, support, information and advice to people with dementia, their carers and their families. The charity aims to improve public policies relating to dementia and be a voice for the 90,000 people in Scotland currently living with dementia. If you have any questions about dementia or the services available across Scotland call Alzheimer Scotland's 24 Helpline on 0808 808 3000.