

TRUST

THYROID TRIAL

NEWSLETTER 2
IRELAND
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TRUST is a research project from five European universities investigating current treatment practices for people who suffer from a mildly underactive thyroid gland. The study is entitled Thyroid Hormone Replacement for Subclinical Hypo-Thyroidism Trial (TRUST). Experts in ageing, thyroid problems and vascular disease from around Europe, work together in the TRUST project: Leyden Academy on Vitality and Ageing and Leiden University Medical Centre, the Netherlands; Universität Bern, Switzerland; University College Cork, Ireland; University of Glasgow, Scotland.

BACKGROUND

Subclinical hypothyroidism means that the thyroid gland, which is found in your neck, may not be producing the right amount of thyroid hormones that your body needs to do its job well. Thyroid hormones are important as they help regulate different parts of the body, including the circulation, heart, muscle and brain. A mildly underactive thyroid, a condition also known as subclinical hypothyroidism affects around one in six people over the age of 65 and has been linked to various health problems, such as heart attacks and strokes, in later life. Subclinical means that there are no noticeable symptoms. Without a blood test, it is impossible to know that you have subclinical hypothyroidism.

Right now, there is no common way to treat people with subclinical hypothyroidism. Researchers hope to find it with the TRUST study. TRUST researchers will follow 3,000 older people over a five year period in an attempt to better understand how to treat people who suffer from subclinical hypothyroidism. Half of the subjects will be treated with a hormone replacement drug, thyroxine, while the other half will be given a placebo; both groups will then be monitored to evaluate how they respond to the treatments.

We are inviting people over the age of 65 who have had a recent blood test at their doctors the results of which suggest that they may have subclinical hypothyroidism and therefore may be suitable to take part in the TRUST Study.

IRISH UPDATE

In March 2013 the TRUST team in Ireland began recruiting participants from the Cork region. Participants are identified from the primary care setting. Initially, in order to inform and engage GPs with TRUST, our study doctors presented at Continuing Medical Education Meetings. Then with the GP's permission our study nurses visited their practices, identified potential participants and the GPs confirmed their patient's eligibility thereafter. These participants are seen in our Clinical Research Facility Centre, Mercy University Hospital, Cork. We have received excellent engagement from GPs with over 60 GP practices actively referring patients to the trial.

In order to increase our participant numbers we are presently opening up additional sites in Southern Ireland. This necessitated the recruitment of more study nurses.

Dr Vera McCarthy, study coordinator has been appointed as a lecturer in the School of Nursing and Midwifery, UCC. She will continue to have a leadership role as co-PI. Caroline Hurley, who has been part of the study team for over a year, will take on the role of study coordinator.

COLLABORATION WITH IEMO 80+

By signing the Memorandum of Understanding, the collaboration between the IEMO 80+ Thyroid Trial and the TRUST Thyroid Trial was officially confirmed on November 4th in Glasgow. Two studies with one research question: what is the safety and efficacy of thyroid hormone supplementation in older adults with subclinical hypothyroidism? Whereas the TRUST Thyroid Trial will be performed in four universities throughout Europe (Glasgow, Bern, Cork and Leiden) among 3000 participants aged 65 or older, the IEMO 80+ Thyroid Trial will be performed in three University Medical Centers in the Netherlands among 450 participants aged 80 years and older.

Both trials use identical research infrastructures and share local procedures, which enhances the efficiency to perform the trials. Effects for the 80+ participants of both studies allows for giving a specific advice regarding the treatment of subclinical hypothyroidism in the 80+ population. Both trials have started recruiting participants in 2013.



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For more information visit www.trustthyroidtrial.com.