

Oesophageal Research Newsletter

St. James's Hospital



Welcome to the first edition of the St. James's Hospital Oesophageal Research Newsletter. We are really excited to share with you some updates from our ongoing research and clinical trials.



This newsletter contains a summary from each of our core research teams working in the areas of:

- Preparing for and recovering from surgery
- Treatment approaches
- Cancer biology

We hope you find this newsletter informative, and that you will be able to join us for our patient and family members' Information Evening, which will take place at St. James's Hospital on the 30th of May 2017.

Sincerely,

Professor John Reynolds

Rehabilitation Strategies following Oesophageal Cancer: ReStOre Trial

Study team: Professor Juliette Hussey, Dr Emer Guinan, Dr Suzanne Doyle, Ms Linda O'Neill

The ReStOre programme was developed as a collaboration between surgeons, physiotherapists and nutritionists. The study aims to restore health and well-being following treatment through a structured programme of exercise, dietary advice and education. The 12-week programme, which is run through the Clinical Research Facility at St. James's Hospital, involves supervised exercise, a programme of exercise completed

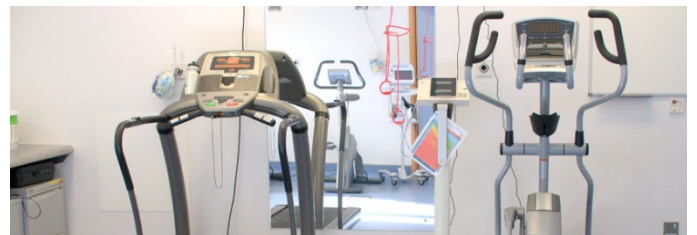
at home, one-to-one sessions with the dietitian and group education on topics of interest to patients recovering from cancer of the oesophagus or stomach.

Over the past two years, 56 patients who have completed treatment for cancer of the oesophagus or stomach, were recruited to the ReStOre programme. The programme is designed with the patient at the centre and therefore the first 12 participants were recruited as volunteers to give feedback on the programme design and content. The initial response from participants was very positive with patients describing the many benefits of the programme on their everyday lives and improving many aspects of their physical fitness. We have recently completed a larger, second-phase examination of the programme with 44 participants. The final participants will complete all assessments for this programme in June 2017 and we are hopeful that the programme will again prove valuable to patients.

The ReStOre programme is a unique rehabilitation programme and an important first step in our goal to enhance fitness and quality of life for patients recovering from treatments for cancer of the oesophagus and stomach.



ReStOre Trial
Rehabilitation Strategies following
Oesophageal Cancer

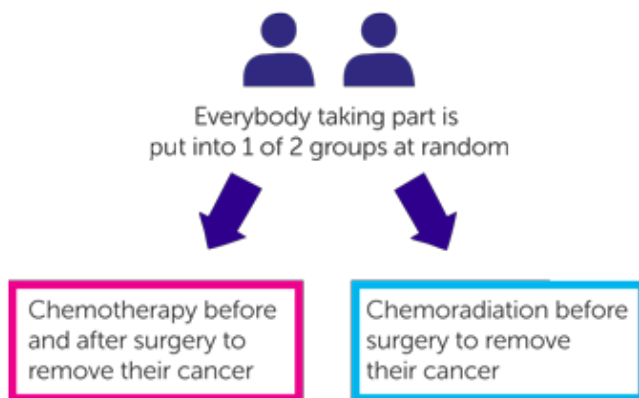


NeoAEGIS Trial

Study team: Ms Catherine O'Farrell, Dr Sinead Cuffe, Dr Moya Cunningham, Dr John Kennedy, Professor Narayanasamy Ravi

St. James's is the primary site for the NeoAEGIS multicentre trial, which is comparing two treatment pathways for a specific type of oesophageal cancer. It is being run in 10 centres, nationally and internationally, and will ultimately enroll 366 participants. The aim is to determine which treatment strategy is most effective in this group of patients, a question which has never been answered before. This will ensure that patients receive the best care available for the type of oesophageal cancer they have, and will align treatment pathways internationally.

Catherine O'Farrell is the dedicated trial nurse at St. James's Hospital, and her role is integral to the running of the trial.



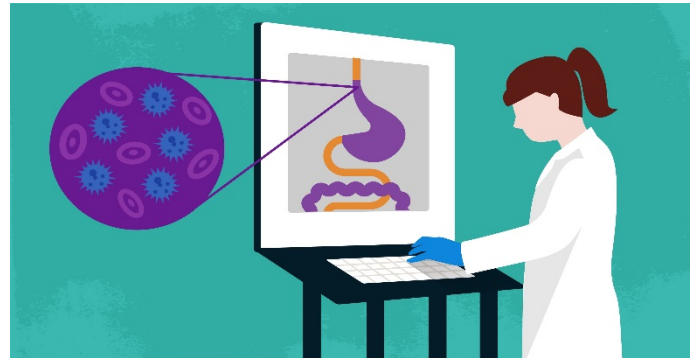
Gut Function

Study team: Professor Carel le Roux, Dr Jessie Elliott, Dr Conor Murphy

Weight loss and nutritional problems are common during and after treatment for oesophageal cancer. Recent research has shown that the gut plays a key role in signaling feelings of hunger and fullness. Our studies aim to investigate how changes in gut function might alter appetite and result in weight loss during and after treatment for oesophageal cancer.

We have found that changes in gut hormones play an important role in the development of problems with a lack of appetite, and feeling too full after eating a small amount, in people with previous cancer operations involving the oesophagus or stomach.

Studies to this point have assessed how these hormones are affected by surgery, and how certain medications can change hormone levels, and improve symptoms at mealtimes, potentially allowing people to eat more. The plan for the future is to further develop our understanding, to allow us to apply our findings to clinical practice in order to improve patients' experiences of eating after surgery, which we believe will have a strong positive impact on quality of life.



Cancer Biology

Study team: Professor Jacintha O'Sullivan, Dr Graham Pigeon, Dr Niamh Lynam-Lennon, Dr Joanne Lysaght, Ms Niamh Clarke, Ms Emma Foley

This programme is directed by Professor Jacintha O'Sullivan, and uses advanced techniques of tissue storage, called "bio-banking". Much of this work is focussed on understanding how oesophageal cancer develops, and the role of the body's immune system in this process. Another major focus of this work is to understand why some people have different responses to treatments such as chemotherapy and radiation. By developing a better understanding of the factors influencing responses, we may be able to figure out who will respond well, and also who will be less likely to benefit from these approaches, for whom alternative strategies may be more suitable. Another important part of this programme is the "drug discovery" pathway, which aims to identify new treatments for people with oesophageal cancer.

All of this progress can be achieved only through patients and healthy volunteers kindly consenting to the donation of biopsy samples at endoscopy and at the time of surgery. Ultimately, what is learned from this research program will help to improve prevention and treatment for patients in the future.