

EPIC-Norfolk Newsletter Autumn 2022

Dear EPIC-Norfolk participants,

Welcome to the Autumn 2022 EPIC-Norfolk participant newsletter.

By being part of this study, you have contributed your data to one of the largest population studies worldwide, with over half a million participants recruited across ten countries across Europe. Collectively you have completed numerous food diaries and questionnaires, attended health check visits and provided blood samples.

Your data is still vitally important to research today, and you have led the way in helping researchers understand how health can be improved through better understanding of the role of lifestyle and biological factors.

EPIC-Norfolk participants have attended five different health checks since the study started, with each one having a slightly different focus. Participants have been followed up for a variety of different health outcomes: initially cancer, later broadening out to include heart attacks and strokes, rheumatoid arthritis, thyroid disease, osteoporosis, Alzheimer's disease and many others.

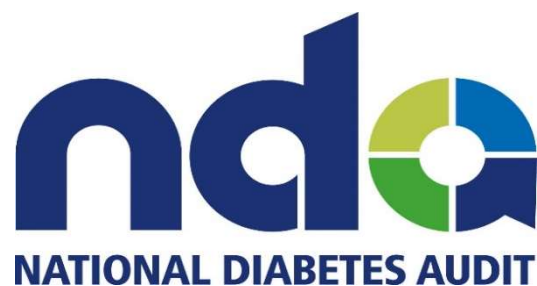
In future, we plan to provide regular newsletters and have more correspondence by email. Please let us know if your email address or if your home address has changed by filling in a secure form at www.epic-norfolk.org.uk/details

National Diabetes Audit (NDA)

EPIC-Norfolk data on risk factors for developing type 2 diabetes in later life has been widely studied, with many scientific publications in this area.

The process of identifying participants who have been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes in the EPIC-Norfolk study has previously involved collecting information from health questionnaires, medication and record linkage to hospital data. The National Diabetes Audit (NDA) is an additional source of information that the EPIC-Norfolk study is planning to use, to help to identify participants diagnosed with diabetes.

The NDA is a major national clinical audit, which measures the effectiveness of diabetes healthcare in England and Wales.



It is delivered by NHS Digital in partnership with Diabetes UK. It collects and analyses data and produces reports that a range of organisations can use to create changes that will improve the quality of services and health outcomes for people with diabetes.

Collecting information from the NDA dataset will add considerable value to the EPIC-Norfolk dataset. It will allow researchers to follow up participants that no longer live in the Norfolk area, which has been a limitation for some more local sources of data collection.

If you have any questions about the EPIC-Norfolk study's linkage to the National Diabetes Audit please contact the study team at epic-norfolk@mrc-epid.cam.ac.uk .

Recent Findings

Asthma treatment and inhalers

A study has been conducted looking at the effects of inhaling steroids for asthma treatment.

The study involving data from over 14,000 people from four study groups including



participants from the EPIC-Norfolk study has found that inhaled corticosteroid (ICS, also known as glucocorticosteroids, glucocorticoids, steroids) treatment is associated with adrenal suppression, even at low doses.

Adrenal suppression is when the adrenal gland does not produce enough hormones such as cortisol, which can cause symptoms such as chronic fatigue, muscle weakness and abdominal pain. Therefore, ICS dosage should be optimised to minimise adrenal suppression while maintaining its established benefits in asthma management.

Using information from electronic medical records, researchers found that cortisol levels were substantially reduced throughout the entire 24-hour daily period in patients with asthma who were treated with ICS compared to those who were untreated and to patients without asthma. Additionally, patients with asthma who were treated with ICS showed significant increases in fatigue and anaemia as compared to those without ICS treatment. Adrenal suppression in patients with asthma treated with ICS might, therefore, represent a larger public health problem than previously recognized.

Recommendation: Regular cortisol monitoring of patients with asthma treated with ICS is needed to provide the optimal balance between minimizing adverse effects of adrenal suppression while capitalising on the established benefits of ICS treatment.

Publications

You can now find links to all publications from the EPIC-Norfolk study on the website: www.epic-norfolk.org.uk/study-findings/publications/

Opportunity to join the EPIC-Norfolk Study Participant Panel

There are no current plans for a further health check, but the EPIC-Norfolk Participant Advisor Panel continues to advise on study matters, and we are looking for people to join the panel. The main role of the group is to provide a public perspective on all aspects of the EPIC-Norfolk Study. We are particularly interested in having input from participants about topics such as:

- Designing research questionnaires
- Reviewing participant-facing information
- Writing lay summaries and participant opinion statements
- Initiating and reviewing website updates
- Reviewing methods of results dissemination
- Reviewing of potential future projects or collaborative projects
- Providing a participant voice in the appropriate use of research material
- Reviewing the sharing of data and results that have been created by the study

There are up to four meetings a year. These take place at the Assembly house in Norwich. Members are able to attend meetings in person, and we have remote options available.

No prior experience or specialist knowledge are necessary to be a member of this group, just a keen

interest in the research that you have contributed to and a willingness to help us shape future plans. Panel members, shall receive payment and travel expenses for their involvement in the group.

If you would like any further information to help you decide whether you would like to be involved in this group, or to register your interest in being a member, please contact **Nicola Kimber (EPIC-Norfolk Study Coordinator)**:

- EPIC-Norfolk@mrc-epid.cam.ac.uk
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How to contact us



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Privacy notice

You will find a copy of the EPIC-Norfolk privacy notice at www.epic-norfolk.org.uk/for-participants/privacy-statement

If you no longer wish to receive these newsletter updates, please contact the study team using the information above. This will not prevent you from receiving any direct communication about your participation in the study.
