

# FORECAST STUDY

## Newsletter 4

### The **FORECAST** Study: Factors Predicting the transition from acute to persistent pain in people with sciatica

STUDY NEWSLETTER 04: 1/10/23

#### Study Update

A huge thank you to everyone who has taken part in the **FORECAST** study so far. Working together, we are building a very rich and detailed picture of sciatica, and the **FORECAST** team cannot wait to start making sense of this information as the study goes on.

In our fourth newsletter, we are delighted to introduce another of our collaborators, Mathilde Pascal. Mathilde is the project manager for PAINSTORM, one of the larger pain research collaborations that **FORECAST** forms part of, and we are excited to share more about her role in the project. Look out for Mathilde's profile at the end of the newsletter!

We have been delighted to start to share our work on **FORECAST** at national and international pain conferences over the summer, with Lucy and Soraya sharing posters with pain researchers and patient partners at the Advanced Pain Discovery Platform conference in Nottingham, and with one of our patient partners Christine and our study lead Annina flying the flag for **FORECAST** at pain conferences across Europe this autumn. There are some photos from our travels at the end of the Newsletter.

#### Working on **FORECAST** day-to-day



Prof. Annina Schmid  
Study Lead



Lucy Ridgway  
Study Co-ordinator



Soraya Koushesh  
Research Assistant

Please remember to complete your follow-up questionnaires!

#### Contact

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#### Recruitment update

Recruitment continues at full pace until around the end of 2023. Since our official study launch in May 2022, 127 participants have joined the study. We will recruit another 53 participants over the autumn and winter bringing the total to 180. We are also busily recruiting healthy volunteers (the same gender and age as our participants with sciatica) - please do pass on our details to any friends, family, and neighbours who might be interested!

# The bigger picture: FORECAST's research collaborations

Mathilde Pascal



PAINSTORM

Chronic pain is a complex illness that is still poorly understood and that lacks good treatment options. While FORECAST focuses on sciatica, there could be common elements with other types of pain. This is why initiatives such as the Advanced Pain Discovery Platform (APDP), a 5-year programme funded by the charity Versus Arthritis and the Medical Research Council, are so important. The APDP is supporting research projects on different types of chronic pain, bringing together patients, academics, and private sector partners, in order to break through the complexity of pain and reveal new treatment approaches to address a wide range of chronic conditions.

Within the APDP, the FORECAST team is contributing to and working closely with PAINSTORM, a consortium studying neuropathic pain. Neuropathic pain usually occurs following damage to the sensory nervous system. Nerve damage can be caused by a range of conditions, including diabetes, HIV, and chemotherapy for cancer treatment, and results in sensations such as pins and needles, burning, electric shocks, itch...

Some of this might sound familiar, and that's because sciatic pain has neuropathic characteristics. To find out where the commonalities lie between sciatica and the other conditions mentioned above, the data provided by FORECAST participants will be analysed alongside those of PAINSTORM participants. We hope that this will allow us to discover unique markers of neuropathic pain across conditions. Better understanding how neuropathic pain works will also lead to better research, better clinical trials, and hopefully better treatment for patients.

If you are curious to learn more, we recently released the first episode of PAINCAST: Neuropathic Pain Unravelled, a podcast exploring the experience of living with neuropathic pain. You can listen to it on our website:

<https://www.painstorm.co.uk/paincast>

**HEALTHY  
VOLUNTEERS  
NEEDED!**

We are continuing to look for people aged 30-85 who do not have back or leg pain to join our 'healthy' group so please do spread the word. Contact us on FORECAST@ndcn.ox.ac.uk, or call on 01865 234543 for more information - we would be delighted to hear from you!

[www.tinyurl.com/FORECASTstudy](http://www.tinyurl.com/FORECASTstudy)

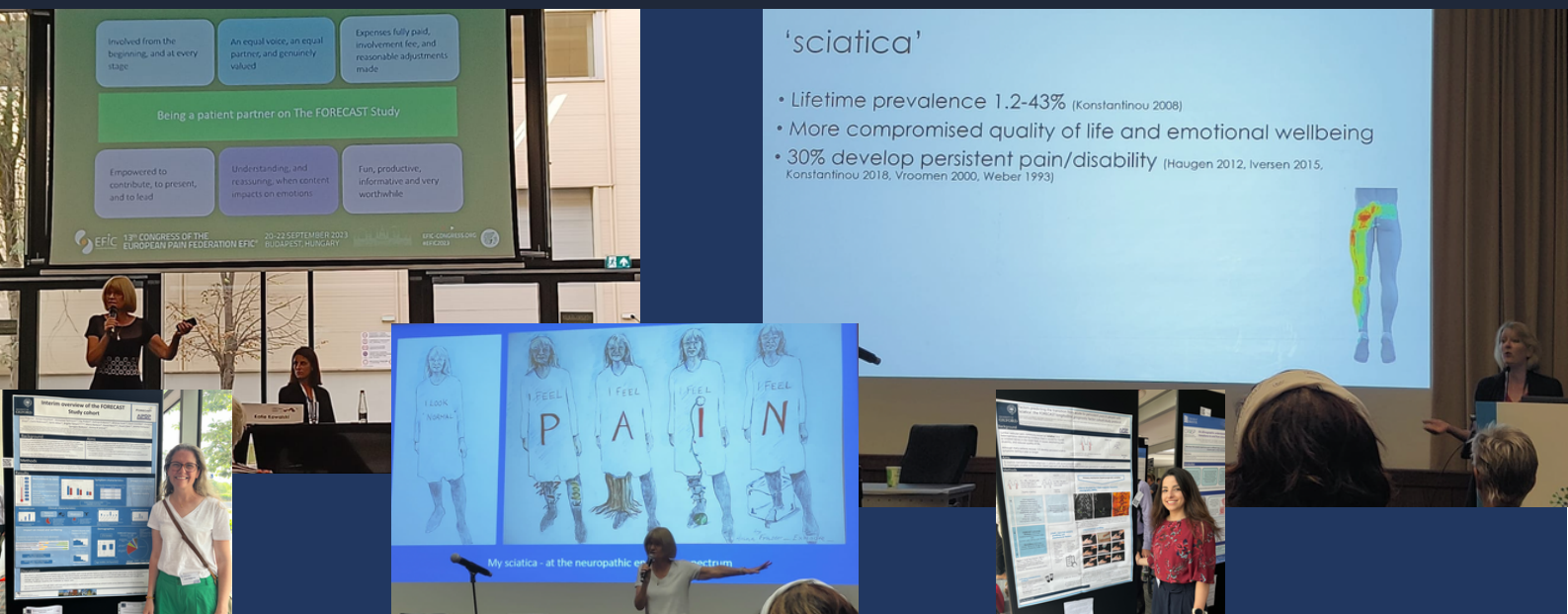
# Meet the PAINSTORM Project Coordinator



## Mathilde Pascal

Mathilde Pascal is the project co-ordinator for PAINSTORM. Her expertise is in research funding and managing international research projects. Previously, she co-ordinated DOLORisk, a 5-year grant funded by the European Union to study neuropathic pain and whose work is being continued by PAINSTORM. Mathilde is in charge of the day-to-day management of the project, ensuring smooth collaboration, reporting to funders, and occasionally helping with data analysis.

## Flying the FORECAST Flag!



A final reminder..... to please remember to complete your follow-up questionnaires!

We are eagerly collecting follow-up questionnaires as they come in, from the brief symptom report surveys once a month, to the longer questionnaires at three and twelve months, to shed light in detail on how sciatica behaves over time - these questionnaires are vitally important to our study and we are looking forward to reading all of the responses.