

# FORECAST STUDY

## Newsletter 6

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

STUDY NEWSLETTER 06: 9/9/24

#### STUDY UPDATE

A huge thank you to everyone who has taken part in the FORECAST study so far.

We have had a fantastic response to a call-out for healthy volunteers via the Be Part of Research Registry (<https://bepartofresearch.nihr.ac.uk/>) and recruited all of our remaining healthy volunteers throughout a very busy April/May. Thank you to everyone who found us through “be part of research”. If anyone else is interested in hearing about all kinds of interesting research studies that are open for recruitment, please do consider signing up to the registry by following the link above.

As we reach the magic numbers of 180 participants and 60 healthy volunteers for FORECAST and close recruitment, the FORECAST Study Team are busy getting to work on the first stages of analysing the information participants shared with us in their first study visit. We are continuing to collect follow up information through questionnaires and one-year visits until the last person reaches one year - thank you to you all for sharing this fantastic information with us!

In our sixth newsletter, we are delighted to let you know about two exciting research opportunities that you might be interested in. Firstly a new study that is linked to FORECAST, interested in understanding the day-to-day experience of living with sciatica in more detail. Please see page 2 for more details and do get in touch with us on FORECAST@ndcn.ox.ac.uk or 01865 234543 if you would like to hear more.

Secondly, there is an opportunity to try out a different research role by joining the patient advisory group for another study aiming to better understand weakness in sciatica - see page 3 for more details!

Working on FORECAST day-to-day



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#### 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.



# Research Opportunity

An invitation from our study psychologists to take part in  
the Daily Assessment Sub-study

Dr Whitney Scott

Professor Geert Crombez

We have an exciting update to share with you about the launch of a new sub-study related to **FORECAST**! This is called the daily assessment sub-study. We will be asking people who join this extra study to complete short assessment questions several times a day for 20 days using a smart phone app. This will help us to get a much more in-depth understanding of people's experience with nerve pain ("sciatica") day-by-day.

This daily assessment sub-study fits with the overall aims of **FORECAST** and hopes to answer the following questions:

- Which nerve pain symptoms are most relevant to each participant and how do these symptoms change over time?
  - What is the link between pain and emotions, and do certain "protective" psychological factors weaken the link between these?
  - How does physical activity change and relate to nerve pain over time?
- What is it like for participants to complete daily assessments of their symptoms?

You can participate in this sub-study if you have been experiencing nerve-related pain for the last three months or more. Someone from the **FORECAST** team will discuss with you if you might be eligible for this sub-study during or after your 12-month visit.

This sub-study is also linked to the PAINSTORM consortium. PAINSTORM is looking at biological, psychological, and social factors related to nerve pain from a range of different causes. We were fortunate to have lots of feedback from the PAINSTORM patient partners for this daily assessment sub-study to make the questions as relevant as possible. We hope to learn lots from this study that can ultimately improve the assessment and treatment of nerve-related pain.

Dr Whitney Scott  
Professor Geert Crombez  
(FORECAST collaborators)

# Sciatica and Leg Weakness Patient Advisory Group

## An invitation to shape future research

### What is a Patient Advisory Group?

A patient advisory group (PAG) is a small group of people (6-8) who advise a researcher or research group on patient-related issues. This advice is essential to the researchers who may never have experienced the condition themselves.



I am Lucy Dove, a physiotherapist with experience of working with people with sciatica. I have funding from the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) to investigate leg weakness in people with sciatica. My previous research showed that 85% of people coming to a hospital appointment due to sciatica report weakness in their leg, but that only 34% are found to have weakness when we test them. This mismatch could be caused by many things and my PhD will investigate some of the possible reasons. I will also establish whether we can improve the way we measure leg weakness in people with sciatica.

I am looking for people to join my study patient advisory group. You will help me to make decisions about my study as it develops. We will meet in person or online every 3-4 months in a group setting. Your experience of sciatica will help me to understand what is realistic in a research study. You will help me with ideas on where to find people to take part in my research study.

You will be reimbursed for your time and any travel costs incurred.

In some cases, you may need some training to help you to advise me. Changing a word document or accessing an online meeting might be some examples where we can help you to learn new skills.

If you would like to know more about the project and what it would involve, please contact:

[lucy.dove@ndcn.ox.ac.uk](mailto:lucy.dove@ndcn.ox.ac.uk)

