

Keep in Touch

We have sent you this newsletter because you have participated in the Scottish Family Health Study (SFHS) or Genetic Health in the 21st Century (21CGH) and have given consent to be re-contacted. This newsletter was sent by the GS research team through an intermediary in the NHS in order to maintain the confidentiality of our participants. Receipt of this newsletter does not necessarily mean that your medical information or samples have been used in the projects described here.



If you would like to receive further information about Generation Scotland, please e-mail info@generationscotland.org, or call 0131 651 1071.

Thank you for participating in a Generation Scotland Study, we wouldn't be able to help medical research without your contribution and continued support.

You Made Us What We Are: Scottish Family Health Study recruits 24,000 participants

The Scottish Family Health Study has now recruited over 24,000 participants from across Scotland. The study, which began in 2006 stopped recruitment last month. Andrew Morris, who has led the research team, said: "We have had a fantastic response from people right across Scotland; more than 24,000 people are involved in the study. Recruitment to the study has now ended, but really that is only the end of the beginning."

Already more than 50 scientific studies are using data gathered through the SFHS. These include

collaborations with leading researchers active in a wide variety of different areas of medical research.

SFHS volunteer Christine Reid, a nurse at Perth Royal Infirmary, said eighteen members of her extended family had signed up to the study. "Rachael, my daughter, was the one who was first aware of the study, and from that we all decided to join it," said Christine. "I think the study is the sort of thing which can have a lot of value for research and the fact that so many people have joined is fantastic."

Pictured: SFHS volunteer Mrs Christine Reid attends her clinic appointment at Ninewells Hospital, Dundee. Also pictured are project leader Professor Andrew Morris and Dundee Clinic Coordinator Ruth Durrant.



Future Plans

At present, all research on Scottish Family Health Study and Genetic Health in the 21st Century samples and data has been carried out by scientists at the four Generation Scotland centres at the Universities of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow and a few other locations in the UK. In the future, we will also consider applications from scientists abroad.

We want Scottish Family Health Study resources to be used by scientists with the best track records and the best ideas, wherever they are based. We plan to contact you to ask your opinion on releasing GS:SFHS samples to trusted scientists in other countries for further research.

How is the Scottish Family Health Study helping medical research?

Thanks to you, as one of our 24,000 participants, the Scottish Family Health Study and Genetic Health in the 21st Century are helping researchers to investigate a wide variety of common health conditions. The samples, measurements and information that were collected during your clinic visit can be analysed in a whole variety of different ways to help scientists learn more about the factors that are important for health and wellbeing. Many of today's research methods only give meaningful results when thousands of samples are analysed – that's why we value the contribution made by all our participants.

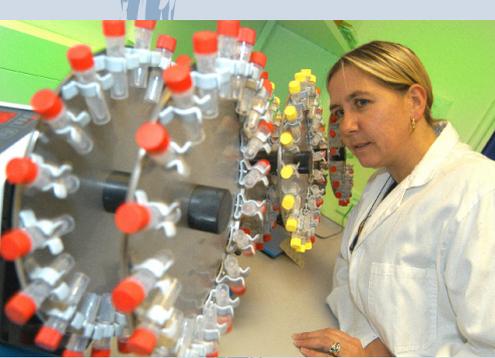
Several projects are already underway. For example, a research team at Glasgow University is combining measurements from Scottish Family Health Study participants – such as weight, blood pressure, cholesterol level, and heart activity – to investigate ways of predicting how likely it is that a person will develop cardiovascular disease, which is a major cause of heart attacks.

In Edinburgh, scientists are exploring how our genes affect our chances of getting depression. They are doing this by comparing the genes (DNA) of hundreds of Scottish Family Health

Study participants who suffer from depression with the DNA of hundreds of unaffected participants.

Other researchers are using Scottish Family Health Study samples and data to investigate the causes of stroke, aspects of ageing, and the unusually severe symptoms in a small group of people out of the many who caught H1N1 influenza during the outbreak in 2010.

This is just a small selection of the 21 projects completed so far. Many other studies are in the pipeline. The Scottish Family Health Study now has approval by a research ethics committee to operate as a research tissue bank. This means that projects carried out on SFHS samples and data must first be approved by a committee of Generation Scotland clinicians, scientists, managers and representatives from the Universities and the NHS. This tissue bank committee reviews proposals to ensure that the research is of high quality, that it fits with Generation Scotland's aims and most importantly that it complies with the consent given by participants. At no stage can participants be identified by researchers. For more information about Generation Scotland research, please visit our new website at www.generationscotland.org



Any comments or further information? Please e-mail us at info@generationscotland.org or call 0131 651 1071.