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News Release

MS study bids to predict disease severity in recently diagnosed patients

Better ways of predicting disease activity in people with MS will be the focus of a new healthcare initiative.

Experts involved in the FutureMS study hope that it will assist doctors to prescribe the right medication, to the right person, at the right time.

Researchers will examine clinical, laboratory, and genomic factors that may influence the frequency of disease ‘relapses’; these affect around 85 per cent of people who have MS. The nature and frequency of these attacks – which involve sudden onset of extreme symptoms that then fade - varies hugely between patients. Consequently, individual treatment decisions are currently reactive rather than proactive.

People who have recently been diagnosed with relapsing-onset multiple sclerosis in Scotland will be invited to take part in the study, based at the University of Edinburgh’s Anne Rowling Regenerative Neurology Clinic together with clinical research hubs in Aberdeen, Dundee, and Glasgow.

Lead researcher Professor Siddharthan Chandran said it is vital that doctors are able to make personalized predictions about MS soon after it is diagnosed. He added that the new venture would help both patients and doctors to plan care and make proactive choices about treatment.

Lead researcher Professor Chandran said “MS is an unpredictable disease. Consequently the newly diagnosed are faced with uncertainty about what course “their” MS might take. This matters as knowing the likely trajectory of their MS will empower the individual to make more informed choices about potential treatment options as well as planning for their own life. Removing this uncertainty is the goal of FutureMS.”

The Scotland-wide study is funded by Stratified Medicine Scotland Innovation Centre.

Doctors, nurses and parties from interest groups will meet at the University of Edinburgh today, Tuesday 24 November, to find out more. It is hoped 500 people with MS will contribute to the study.

For more information please contact Hazel Lambert, Press and PR Officer, hazel.lambert@ed.ac.uk or 0131 650 6357.

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