

Independent Person to become member of the Healthy Eating and Lifestyle Programme (HELP) Trial Steering Committee

We are looking for a member of the public who would be interested to be an independent member of the HELP Trial Steering Committee (TSC). This person would be invited to the TSC's meetings twice a year to give their opinion on the study's progresses. This position is on a voluntary basis only. All travel expenses to come to meetings will be reimbursed.

Background of the Study:

Managing overweight and obesity in the adolescent age group is especially challenging. There is little evidence available to guide treatments and further research is needed. We have organised a research study to trial our Healthy Eating and Lifestyle Programme (HELP) which has shown promising results in a smaller project. The intervention is focused on the young person's needs, using psychological techniques to explore their ideas about weight and raise motivation for change. It also includes up-to-date information on nutrition and lifestyle. A range of individuals contributed to the design of the study, including young people and health care workers that have previously taken part in the HELP programme.

Our study has ethics approval, R&D approval and has NIHR portfolio status. It is funded by the NIHR.

Specific Information on the trial:

200 x 13-17 year olds with obesity will be recruited in London and surrounding boroughs, and randomly allocated into one of two groups:

1. The intervention group (HELP). 12 community 45-minute based sessions with a trained health care worker.
2. The comparison or 'control' group – Young people will be given a brief educational session based upon current Department of Health guidelines regarding healthy lifestyle.

All young people in the trial will be seen at regular intervals at the Great Ormond Street Hospital Clinical Research Facility for psychological and physical assessment (including fasting blood tests). Researchers at this level will not be able to tell which group the young people are in.

The results from the two groups will be analysed at the end of the study to see how the HELP intervention compares to the control group.

Everyone involved with implementing the trial will receive safety training, including in child protection.

Who are the research team?

A broad team of researchers including paediatricians, psychologists and public health physicians are involved. The trial is based at the UCL Institute of Child Health in London. The lead investigators for the trial are Dr Russell Viner, a consultant Paediatrician at University College London Hospital (UCLH)

and Dr Deborah Christie, a consultant clinical psychologist at UCLH. Both are clinical and academic experts in the fields of child and adolescent obesity.

What is the Trial Steering Committee?

The role of the Trial Steering Committee is to provide overall supervision for the trial, overseeing areas such as progress of the trial, adherence to protocol and patient safety. The TSC may need to provide advice, via their Chairman, to the trial's Principle Investigator, the trial funding body (the NIHR) and the trial sponsor (the UCL Institute of Child health).

Membership of Trial Steering Committee

The trial Steering Committee is made up of between 5-12 other members, some of who are involved in research or clinical work. There is also an independent Chairman (not involved directly in the trial other than as a member of the TSC), and two other independent members plus two Principal Investigators. Other members of the research team such as trial co-ordinators and statisticians may attend meetings as observers when appropriate.

It is important to include independent members who are not directly involved in other aspects of the trial to provide protection for both trial participants and the Principle Investigator.

The independent member of public identified through this advert will become a Trial Steering Committee member and bring a different point of view to the team on the study progresses and on all issues raised during the meetings.

Position requirements:

- Having an interest in medical research
- Having an interest in child and adolescent health
- Being available for half a day, twice a year, to attend meetings in London
- Living in Greater London

What will you gain from this?

Being a member of the HELP Trial Steering Committee will provide an opportunity to gain an insight into research trials and contribute to important research in the area of adolescent health.

What to do if you are interested:

Please contact the Anne Mathiot, HELP Trial Manager, on 0207 905 2317 or email at a.mathiot@ich.ucl.ac.uk