



Issue 3 • December 2021 • Group website: www.newcastleage.org

The past 12 months have been incredibly productive for the AGE Research Group with new studies being launched and new staff joining the team. 2021 also saw the AGE team overcome the logistical challenges of lockdown to host the first [International Sarcopenia Translational Research Conference](#), virtually welcoming almost 200 delegates from 25 countries to discuss sarcopenia (loss of muscle strength and mass with age), highlighting it as an important area for clinical practice and translational research.



AGE Research Group Away Day, September 2021

We continue to work closely with patients and members of the public to design our research, making sure that it is relevant and meeting patient need. We have had a varied programme of Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement activities over the past year, including a recent online workshop to talk about research priorities with patients who have muscle weakness, and regular meetings with the ADMISSION Patient Advisory Group (more information below). We are very grateful to all members of the public who generously give their time to support and take part in our research.

Please find below updates from several of our current studies.

With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

MET-PREVENT



After delays due to the COVID pandemic, we are delighted to have started recruitment to our MET-PREVENT randomised controlled trial. This exciting new clinical trial aims to test whether the medication metformin can improve muscle strength and function in older people. Metformin is used to treat patients with diabetes, but previous research has shown that metformin may have a wide range of benefits beyond simply lowering blood sugar. Metformin may therefore be able to prevent or

treat a range of age-related conditions in people who do not have diabetes.

We are aiming to recruit 80 older people with slow walking speed and muscle weakness for this trial. Half of the participants will take metformin for four months; The other half will take a dummy (placebo) tablet for four months. The first participants have now been enrolled into the trial in Newcastle and in Gateshead and we expect to have results ready in Spring 2023.

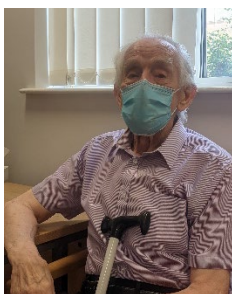
LiLL-OPM



Richard Dodds (study investigator) with one of the LiLL-OPM study participants

The Lifestyle in Later Life – Older People’s Medicine (LiLL-OPM) Study is recruiting participants from the Belsay Day Unit, run by the department of Older People’s Medicine at Newcastle Hospitals. The study invites older adults living with multiple long-term conditions and frailty to take part in interviews and a questionnaire about their health and lifestyle. Carers of

older adults are also being asked if they would like to be involved in research. So far, we have successfully recruited 13 participants. They have shared their thoughts and attitudes towards physical activity and exercise and their overall experiences of taking part in the research. If you would like to read more, please visit the [blog](#) (also under News and Events on the AGE website). We look forward to sharing the findings from the research soon. We would like to express our gratitude to the study participants, their carers and the team at the Belsay Day Unit for their support with the study.



A LiLL-OPM study participant at the Belsay Day Unit



In March, we were successfully awarded funding from the Medical Research Council to support the new ADMISSION project. Over the four years of

this research we aim to transform understanding for patients with multiple long-term conditions admitted to hospital.

We are working with four other universities (Birmingham, Dundee, Manchester Metropolitan and University College London) using novel ways of storing and analysing routine health data to examine patterns or 'clusters' of conditions. Throughout the project, we will look at the effects of background factors such as age, sex, and ethnicity on these clusters. We will use information from a variety of sources to look at journeys through the healthcare system to find out what these are like for patients with clusters of long-term conditions, and how systems may be changed to improve patient experience.

As well as the doctors, researchers, data scientists and statisticians involved, patients and the public are central to the success of ADMISSION's research. Last summer we ran four Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement workshops where patients and carers came together with the research team to discuss and plan the research. We will continue to benefit from

patient and public involvement over the course of the research, working closely with our two public co-applicants and the ADMISSION Patient Advisory Group. We would like to thank everyone involved.



The MASS Studies seek to understand what causes sarcopenia. We've made good progress with recruitment to our main study, MASS_Lifecourse, and recently saw our 100th participant! We have started carrying out some home visits using Zoom, and study researcher Dr Chris Hurst presented at the [International Sarcopenia Translational Research Conference](#) this year on how well this works. We hope to finish recruitment next year and begin analysis of the precious samples and data that we have collected in the study. There are also many other exciting projects in the pipeline, including a new study looking to better understand the loss of muscle that can occur when a person has cancer and its treatment. As ever, a huge thank you to everyone who has taken part in MASS_Lifecourse and we will keep you posted on results from the study.

Keep in touch with the AGE Research Group: we would be very grateful if you could take the time to let us know if your contact details change using the online form at <https://bit.ly/37LXoP5>. We also quite understand that you may no longer wish to receive information from us. If that is the case please let us know, again using the form. Thank you.