



AGE
Research Group

Newsletter 2022



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It has been a very busy year for the AGE Research Group - with studies being launched, papers published about our research and new staff joining the team.

We are delighted to share the news that the NIHR Newcastle Biomedical Research Centre, that funds many of our studies, has been awarded [£23.1 Million of funding](#) by the Department of Health and Social Care. This marks the fourth successful application from Newcastle in this national competition and recognises us as a world-leading centre for research in ageing and multiple long-term conditions.



AGE Research Group, May 2022

Our work with patients and members of the public is a key feature of AGE research and we have taken part in a range of different Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement activities this year. These include the launch of a new 'Let's talk research' project ([Let's Talk Research \(ncl.ac.uk\)](http://Let's Talk Research (ncl.ac.uk))), that involves older people who live with long-term conditions and frailty in conversations about research, as well as our regular project meetings with patient and public advisors, such as the ADMISSION Patient Advisory Group (more information below). Patients and members of the public contribute to our research in many different ways - we are very grateful to everyone who supports us.

Please find below updates from several of our current studies.

With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.



MET-PREVENT

We completed recruitment to our MET-PREVENT clinical trial at the end of September. 72 of you joined the trial - the final study visits will be complete by the end of January 2023. MET-PREVENT is testing whether a commonly used diabetes medicine (metformin) can improve muscle strength and quality of life for people with sarcopenia (muscle weakness).

A big thank you to all of you who are taking part, and we look forward to sharing the results with you in 2023.



The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

APPETITE

JPI PREVNUT Prevention of undernutrition in older adults

Over the past year we have been working with European colleagues in the APPETITE consortium (<https://www.jpi-appetite.com/>), to study appetite loss in older age. Our part of the research was to interview older adults who have poor appetite - to understand how their appetite has changed over time and to hear from them about their experiences. We worked with a public advisory group to design this research; 13 older adults who have poor appetite took part. When we analysed the interviews we identified three main themes: firstly, there were many factors affecting

appetite so that individual 'journeys' to appetite loss were quite different; secondly, attitudes to appetite loss were very variable; thirdly, social interaction and the eating environment played important roles in supporting the participants, often helping them to eat more. Poor appetite is common in older age and linked to poorer health. Our findings highlight the need for new person-centred approaches for the prevention and treatment of appetite loss.





Many people across the UK live with more than one long-term health condition. Living with 'multiple long-term conditions' (MLTC) is a growing issue for patients and for healthcare. The ADMISSION research programme aims to find out more about MLTC in patients who are admitted to hospital.

In the last year we have gained permission to analyse routinely-collected data held by Newcastle and Birmingham hospitals - using these huge anonymised datasets we can learn about patients' patterns of long-term conditions. Alongside this work, we are also planning one-to-one interviews with people who live with MLTC to hear about their experiences of hospital care.

We meet regularly with the Patient Advisory Group, who support and guide ADMISSION. We are very appreciative of their continued interest and their many and varied contributions to this research.

Finally, the ADMISSION team is growing. We are pleased to welcome the PhD students and researchers who have joined us recently. We look forward to sharing more progress soon. Read more at - www.admissioncollab.ncl.ac.uk



The MASS_Lifecourse study aims to understand the causes of sarcopenia.

We have almost completed recruitment and, excitingly, are starting to analyse the samples collected: the first analyses of the muscle samples have given us new information about how muscle cells 'retire' as we get older – a process called senescence. The stool samples are being analysed in another project to find out how bacteria found in our gut affect muscle strength and size.

As ever, a huge thank you to everyone who has taken part. We are now planning the next phase of this research and will be in touch with study participants in 2023 to tell you more.



Dr Karen Suetterlin with one of the study participants



Introducing the ART (Ageing Research Translation) of Healthy Ageing Network

At the start of 2022 we were delighted to receive funding

from UK Research and Innovation to build a national research network on healthy ageing. One of the key aims of this network is to find new ways to make sure that the major advances on ageing, being made in laboratory research, are translated into clinical practice, with direct benefit for patients and the public.

The network is already beginning to play an important role in bringing together academics from different disciplines and institutions, including younger researchers at early stages in their careers, and we're really pleased with its early achievements. As well as hosting national launch events which have helped us build and grow our network, we've presented at two international conferences this year to promote its activities.

We have exciting plans for 2023 including engagement with patients and the public to ensure that the aims of the network align with their priorities and needs.

Please head to our website to read more - <http://www.artofhealthyageing.net/>

You can also follow our studies on Twitter:



[@ARThealthyaging](https://twitter.com/ARThealthyaging)
[@NewcastleAGE](https://twitter.com/NewcastleAGE)
[@ADMISSIONcollab](https://twitter.com/ADMISSIONcollab)

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 <http://bit.ly/3UxQBQk>. 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.