



AGE
Research Group

Newsletter 2023



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2023 has been another busy year at the AGE Research Group as we continue to expand our research activity, our team, and our impact on the lives of older people. Following the news in 2022 that the NIHR Newcastle Biomedical Research Centre, which funds many of our studies, was awarded £23.1 million by the Department of Health and Social Care, we have been working hard to translate our share of this funding into action and cement our place as a world-leading centre for research in ageing and multiple long-term conditions.



AGE Research Group, October 2023

One of our most notable achievements this year was hosting the second International Sarcopenia Translational Research Conference and welcoming over 100 researchers and clinicians from all over the world to Newcastle. The theme was “Where Worlds Meet” and our aim was to highlight the importance of sarcopenia and advance knowledge through encouraging interdisciplinary collaborations and supporting the development of early career researchers.

This year we also appointed a Patient and Public, Involvement & Engagement Manager and our activities in this area have gone from strength to strength, including tea parties to deliver study results, and working with members of the public to co-produce a short video to increase public awareness and understanding of research into muscle ageing. This video can be viewed at www.tinyurl.com/MuscleIn.

Some of our studies are described below. Patients and members of the public continue to be at the heart of everything we do, and we are very grateful to everyone who supports us in any way. If you would like to find out more about getting involved, please get in touch at ageresearch@newcastle.ac.uk.

With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.



MASS
Muscle Ageing and
Sarcopenia Studies

The MASS_Lifecourse study has now recruited over 200 participants. This year we have worked closely with our collaborators who are using the latest technology to learn more about how muscle cells change as we age. We recently posted a questionnaire to participants to collect more information about their health and are grateful to all who responded. In 2024, we will contact participants to invite them back to the Clinical Ageing Research Unit approximately 5 years after their first clinic visit.

By assessing people for a second time, we hope to see how their muscles have changed since their last visit. We will share more updates on this study at an in-person event in spring and will be in touch with participants about this soon. Thank you to everyone who has contributed.



MET-PREVENT

This year, we completed follow-up for the MET-PREVENT trial of Metformin to improve muscle weakness (sarcopenia) in older people. 72 people took part, and 70 completed the trial- a fantastic result!

We held two tea-parties to share the results with participants and friends, and also presented the results at conferences and meetings.



Professor Miles Witham and Dr Claire McDonald speaking at a tea party.

Sadly, the results showed that Metformin did not improve muscle strength, and it did cause some side-effects. However, finding out what doesn't work is just as important as finding out what does work.

We are now analysing blood and stool samples from the trial to find out more about sarcopenia, and the feedback is helping us design the next trials to test new treatments for this condition.

ACIPIMOX

In November we completed recruitment for our study *Acipimox to Improve Muscle Function and Sarcopenia*. This clinical trial investigates whether a medicine used to treat high cholesterol (Acipimox) can improve age related muscle weakness. Participants gave a blood sample, received an MRI scan of their leg, and underwent a muscle biopsy from the thigh, before and after taking Acipimox.

This is a feasibility study, designed to check whether the study will work and is acceptable to participants. We are delighted that all participants completed and were willing to undergo all procedures, demonstrating that this type of intensive study is possible. Analysis of the scans, bloods and muscle samples will begin shortly, and results will be available by summer 2024.



Our ADMISSION research programme focusses on multiple long-term conditions (MLTC) in patients who are admitted to hospital. In 2023 we analysed electronic clinical records from thousands of patients in Birmingham and Newcastle hospitals to discover more about patients' journeys

through hospital, and their combinations of conditions. To complement this work, we are recruiting people with MLTC to tell us about their experiences of hospital care and of living with MLTC through a series of in-depth interviews. We continue to share our findings with researchers at international conferences, and to benefit from the wisdom of our Patient Advisory Group who play an important part in steering the work of the ADMISSION programme – thank you all! Read more at: www.admissioncollab.co.uk

MULTIPLE

MULTIPLE is the UK's first registry for people living with MLTC and it opened in December 2022. Two sites (Newcastle Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust) are recruiting participants and next year we aim to enrol more centres and recruit 500 people. **MULTIPLE** will connect researchers with people living with MLTC who are interested in taking part in research. This will facilitate studies to evaluate new ways of caring for people with MLTC. The first studies will start in early 2024. If you would like to hear more about how to join **MULTIPLE** please contact us.



Our UKRI-funded ART Network continues to bring together academics from different disciplines to ensure that major advances made in ageing

science are translated into public and patient benefit. We continue to attract new members and now have over 200 academics from different disciplines, career stages and countries on our mailing list.

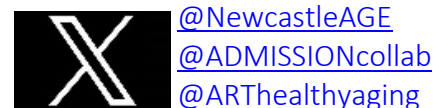
In 2023 we promoted translational ageing research in many ways. For example, we funded four research projects involving a number of institutions across the UK and beyond which demonstrate interdisciplinary collaboration and involve early career researchers. We presented at scientific conferences, ran an interactive workshop for early career researchers, and sponsored free places and a Networking Breakfast at the International Sarcopenia Translational Research Conference (ISTRC).



Delegates networking at the ISTRC

All activities were well received, as confirmed by our recent funding extension, allowing us to continue delivering the aims of the Network and aligning these with the priorities of patients and the public. For more information see: www.artofhealthyageing.net

You can also follow our studies on X:



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