

Research Opportunity!!!



Do you want to be involved in a unique learning opportunity for your students...?

Would you be interested in being involved in research aimed at improving asthma control in children and young people in schools?

If so, you could be involved in some novel research being run from the centre for Genomics and Child Health at Queen Mary, University of London.

This research is looking to improve asthma control in London secondary school students through a series of educational workshops and a theatre performance, aimed at improving knowledge of asthma.

It is hoped that this research will improve quality of life for children and young people living with asthma, and their families, through better control of their symptoms, and fewer visits to their doctor or hospital. We also hope that this study will raise awareness of asthma among peers in schools.



What is this study about?

Asthma affects approximately one in eleven children and young people in the UK; and children with asthma have higher rates of school absences and visits to their doctor or the hospital. Improving the symptoms of asthma can reduce some of these negative impacts, through an improvement in asthma control. We have previously visited secondary schools in London and collected some questionnaire data on asthma control and medication adherence among teenagers, and we now know that asthma control and adherence to medication among secondary school students in London is generally low and could be improved. We also know from our earlier research that peer awareness is an important barrier to adherence for children with asthma, due to feelings of embarrassment or fears of being bullied.

This study aims to improve asthma control through a series of educational workshops and a theatre performance. The workshops will be fun and interactive and will aim to teach children about asthma, including the role of medication and the importance of good communication with their GP. To address peer awareness, a short theatre performance, lasting approximately two hours, will also be delivered to the entire year group, to help raise awareness of asthma among peers.

How will each student benefit?

Each student who attends the workshops will benefit from improved knowledge of asthma and how best to manage the symptoms. Students will also benefit from increased awareness of asthma in schools, to reduce the stigma that is currently felt by students with asthma. There will be additional benefits to students, including:

- A chance to interact with their peers and discuss an important topic that is common in schools.



- An opportunity to be involved in scientific research, the results of which will be submitted to scientific journals and conferences.
- A certificate of involvement for their CVs.

Are there any risks involved?

It is not expected that there are any major risks involved. All students and their parents will be fully informed of the research and will be given advice on how to find out more about the study. All student participation is voluntary, and students can withdraw any time, without giving a reason and without affecting their medical care.

What do we need from you?

This research aims to work with secondary schools in London for this research. Each school will be expected to:

- Identify eligible students using medical records. This will include students in years 7 and 8 at secondary school with a diagnosis of asthma. For the theatre workshop, all students in years 7 and 8 will be invited to watch the performance.
- Inform parents about the study and their child's participation (we will provide you with the necessary information sheets and consent forms).
- Inform the students of where and when the study will take place (following approval from parents).
- Organise a room for the workshops to take place. We will let you know exactly what we will need in the room (e.g. a computer).

Your children will also be asked to complete the short questionnaire five times over the course of twelve months. This questionnaire can be completed in schools and will be flexible, to ensure that there is minimal disruption to the school day. We are happy to fit in around the calendar and timetable of the school.



What will our school get out of it?

All schools will be provided with all the information sheets and consent/withdrawal forms that will be required to be sent to parents. Schools will also be reimbursed financially for their time.

What will happen at the end of the study?

At the end of the study, the data that is collected will be written into a report, which will be sent back to each school. All student identifiable data will be removed and replaced with an ID number. No confidential information will be shared, and all data will be presented as a group. The findings will also be submitted to a science journal and at conferences, both nationally and internationally.

What if our school doesn't want to be involved?

That is absolutely fine. It is completely your choice whether you wish to participate or not.

How can I find out more?

If you are interested in participating, or you would like to find out more, please find contact details below:

Chief Investigator: Professor Jonathan Grigg; 020 7882 2206; j.grigg@qmul.ac.uk

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Thank you for your time!